

IMPRESSIVE
TALKS
—.—
HUMPHREY



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IMPRESSIVE TALKS



IMPRESSIVE TALKS

By
J. M. HUMPHREY

Author of

*"Select Fruits from the Highlands of Beulah," "Spiritual
Lessons from Every Day Life," "Fragments from
the King's Table," "Sermons That Never
Die," "Daily Guide for the Sancti-
fied," "Lost Soul's First Day
in Eternity," Etc., Etc.*

*"Line upon line; here a little,
and there a little" (Isa. 28: 13).*

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DEDICATED
to the Kind Reader
with the earnest hope that
he may be benefited
by its perusal.

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THE OPENING PRAYER

“Eternal Spirit! God of truth! to whom
All things seem as they are; Thou who of old
The prophet's eyes unscaled, that nightly saw,
While heavy sleep fell down on other men,
In holy vision tranced, the future pass
Before him, and to Judah's harp attuned
Burdens which made the pagan mountains shake,
And Zion's cedars bow—inspire my theme;
My eye unscale; me what is substance teach;
And shadow what, while I in holy fear
Attempt to feed the sheep and tender lambs.”

I

THE OCEAN REFLECTING GOD

“Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth,
* * * And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further :
and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?” (Job 38:8, 11).

The all-wise God in creating the universe has so arranged it that all things in heaven and earth, like so many mirrors, should daily reflect His moral attributes. Among the many things employed in this great work is the ocean, which seems to be chief, since in so many ways it resembles the great God.

Now, for our special edification let us notice some of the many ways in which the ocean resembles the Lord Jehovah.

1. It is *unfathomable* in some places. In many instances men have labored to find its depth, but all to no avail. So is the great God unfathomable and past finding out. There is no marvel that Zophar the Naamathite should ask afflicted Job the following questions: “Canst thou * * * find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea” (Job 11:7-9). David also took up the strain and said, “Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold,

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Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Psa. 139:7-10). The prophet Isaiah asked the following questions: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding" (Isa. 40:28).

2. A second way in which the ocean resembles the great God is in the fact that it is *exhaustless*. It is never affected by long droughts or famines. No matter how great the demand for water may be, or how many thirsty souls drink thereof, there is still a full supply. Neither can the great God be exhausted, giving doth not impoverish Him, neither doth withholding enrich Him. Listen to the voice of inspiration, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye" (Isa. 55:1). "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). The blessed Bible closed with the following invitation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). There is enough for all, and enough to spare.

3. Yet another way in which the ocean resembles the great Creator is in the fact that it is *unconquerable* and can not be controlled or restrained by

THE OCEAN REFLECTING GOD

human power. It heeds not the voice of kings with all their wealth and war, but lifts its proud head above all created powers, and bows to none but God. How strikingly this reminds us of Him who maketh the clouds His chariot, and rideth upon the wings of the wind; He "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance;" He, who said, "Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing * * * Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: that bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity" (Isa. 40:12, 15, 21-23). Job exclaimed, "Lo, He goeth by me, and I see Him not. * * * Behold, He taketh away, who can hinder Him? Who will say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Job 9:11, 12).

4. *Benevolence* is another characteristic of the ocean which strikingly resembles our heavenly Father. "The great ocean is in a constant state of evaporation. It gives back what it receives, and sends up its waters in mists to gather into clouds;

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and so there is rain on the fields, and storm on the mountain, and greenness and beauty everywhere. But there are people who do not believe in evaporation. They get all they can and keep all they get. How numberless are the blessings we owe to the ocean, the father and sustainer of all organic life! He it is that feeds the streams, that fills the lakes, that bubbles in the spring, that foams in the cataract, or rushes along in the mountain torrent. Should his eternal fountains be dried up, the blooming surface of the earth would be converted into a naked waste. To him we owe the magnificence of our forests, the verdure of our meadows, and the beauty of our fields. It is his waters we enjoy in the luscious fruits of our orchards, or quaff in the juice of the exhilarating grape. They circulate in the veins of numberless animals; of the bee which offers us the sweet tribute of its honey; of the bird, that charms us with its melodious song; of the domestic quadruped, on whose flesh we feed, and whose services are indispensable to our welfare." Oh, how strikingly this reminds us of our benevolent Creator!

"Harp of Eternity! begin the song,
Redeemed and angel harp! begin to God,
Begin the anthem ever sweet and new,
While I extol Him, holy, just and good.
Life, beauty, light, intelligence and love,
Eternal, uncreated, infinite!
Unsearchable Jehovah! God of truth,
Maker, upholder, governor of all!
Thyself unmade, ungoverned, unupheld!

THE OCEAN REFLECTING GOD

Omnipotent, unchangeable, great God!
Exhaustless fulness! giving unimpaired!
Bounding immensity, unspread, unbounded!
Highest and best! beginning, middle, end!
All-seeing eye! all-seeing and unseen!
Hearing unheard! all-knowing, and unknown!
Above all praise! above all height of thought!
Proprietor of immortality!
Glory ineffable! bliss underived!"

II

SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM THE STARS

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psa. 19:1).

In the Word of God there are many beautiful pictures drawn from the stars. In the book of Daniel we read the following statement: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

Jesus said: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars" (Luke 21:25). Paul said: "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars" (1 Cor. 15:41).

The soul whose chief aim upon earth is to know God and live in the center of His will, learns of Him not only from the Bible, but also from the birds, flowers, grasses, winds, waters, clouds, sun, moon and stars. On many an evening we have all, no doubt, stood and gazed with amazement upon the billions of starry lamps which gilded the azure vault.

During the writer's meditation upon the twinkling stars, he has learned from them the following lessons, which he wishes to here impart to the reader.

1. The first thing that comes to mind is how

SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM THE STARS

vastly they differ in size and luster. While many of them sparkle like large diamonds, there are millions of others so small and dim that they can scarcely be seen. Notwithstanding that being a fact, there is no envy or dissatisfaction existing among them, but they all unite their voices and joyfully and harmoniously sing the nocturnal doxology. Is this not an excellent lesson for Christians to learn? There are those who are perplexed and puzzled over not being gifted and talented like some one else. Others are tempted to leave the corner in which God has placed them, because the visible results are not so great as those of a fellow worker. And still another class are tempted to doubt away their present experience because they do not jump as high, shout as loud, talk as long or get blest as frequently as some one else. O brother, sister! do learn a lesson from the stars and be contented to be yourself and to shine in your own sphere.

2. The next profound lesson which the writer has learned from the stars is as follows: They are not spasmodic in performing their nightly task, but constant and faithful. No night is too dark, no storm too loud, no weather too severe to prevent their being on duty. It matters not how things go in earth or hell, they continue to *shine on*. Reader, if you would live for God and be a blessing to humanity, you must get an experience where nothing disturbs or turns you from the royal way. No matter what men or devils say or do, you must stand fast and ever hold an even light before the world.

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Jesus said: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

3. A third truth revealed by the stars is this: Notwithstanding their variation in size and luster, they all send forth the same *quality* of pure, flawless light. It is true many of them are so small that they can scarcely be seen with the natural eye, yet they send forth as pure a light as the larger ones. We may not all be called to preach, write books, sing the gospel or go to foreign fields, yet we can be sincere Christians, having a spotless character, unbiased purpose and white motive. These things are of greater value in the sight of God than the creating of a world. What saith the Scripture? "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

4. The next valuable lesson taught by the stars, which we shall never forget, is this: No matter how the spangling arch may be backgrounded with boundless gloom, the darkness does not affect the stars, but strengthens and increases their luster. So it is with the true child of God, instead of trouble,

SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM THE STARS

sorrow, opposition and disappointment hindering him and casting him down, it only makes him shine the brighter.

5. The fact that the stars and other orbs are much larger in reality than they appear to the natural eye, has also taught us a wonderful lesson. "Ask an astronomer, How large is the spangling arch? and instantly he would see in imagination unnumbered millions of worlds, systems, constellations, clusters and aggregations in our or the visible universe, and beyond this he is reasonably certain that other universes, universe after universe, infinity after infinity, unspeakable in dimension and duration, stretch away into unfathomable, endless space, until his imagination is stunned, his mind reels, and his reason cries, 'Halt!' for the finite mind here meets the incomprehensible." Mercury from our view-point is scarcely larger than a pin-head, but in reality it is said to be about three thousand miles in diameter. The child of God, from the sinner's view-point, appears small, worthless and insignificant, but when we see him from redemption's view-point, we see a redeemed saint, a king, a priest, a son of God, an heir of heaven, a being of endless fame and years. He is by no means alone and single-handed, but angels are camping about him, and the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are abiding in him, and all of the armies of heaven are at his command.

Praise God for the lessons from the stars!

III

GOD IN THE STORMS

“Make them afraid with Thy storm” (Psa. 83:15).

No doubt on judgment day when the secrets of all hearts are fully known, and the providence of God fully revealed to the children of men, we will awake to the fact that many of the things which we feared in this life, and considered among our chief enemies, were some of our greatest blessings in disguise.

From our difficult point of view in this present life, there is hardly anything more dreaded by the human race than storms, cyclones and earthquakes; and yet these very things have given rise to more genuine revivals of religion than a generation of preachers and gospel workers. Doubtless the prophet Isaiah, to some extent, had this thought in mind when he penned the following lines: “When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:9).

Let us briefly notice some of the many blessings that are brought to us through storms and cyclones.

1. There is hardly a more convincing argument against infidelity to be found this side of eternity than that produced by an electric storm. It is almost a matter of impossibility for a puny, finite being to behold the zigzag lightning playing hide-and-

GOD IN THE STORMS

seek in the heavens, and listen to the cannons of heaven thundering loud and long, and still doubt the existence of a supreme being. It is true he may try to leave his fellow men under the impression that he does not believe in the existence of a supreme being, but deep down in his heart he believes differently.

2. Storms and cyclones are some of Jehovah's most successful ways of speaking to thoughtless, impenitent sinners. Many times, when being addressed by the Man of God, they are trifling, irreverent and unheeding, but not so when being addressed by the wolfy winds, the zigzag lightning, and the rumbling thunders. During such times, many sit in breathless awe, some flee to their secret chambers to hide, and others grow serious and calm. No time then for mirth and jesting, for Jehovah, the Lord of all the earth, the Proprietor of immortality, is speaking; hence they are compelled to give Him audience.

3. Storms to some extent give us a faint conception of the power and mightiness of God. When we behold houses being scattered like chaff, the earth plowed like a corn field, the mountains swept like a threshing floor, the giant oak broken like a slender reed, and the ocean piled into mountains of foaming water, we are then brought to realize more fully the mightiness of Jehovah, and the thunder of His power.

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps on the sea
And rides upon the storm."

IV

A FIELD

"The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed" (Gen. 27:27).

The Lord Jesus, while upon earth, was a great out-of-doors preacher; therefore He frequently called the attention of His hearers to a field. At one time He called their attention to the grasses of a field, at another time to the lilies, and at still another time, to the grain. All of these were the products of the field.

While the writer of these lines was deeply meditating upon a field, he discovered so many beautiful resemblances to our heavenly Father that he could not resist the temptation of jotting them down.

In the Savior's sermon on the mount, He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And so it is, all those who really get cleansed from sin and who really have their eyes anointed with the holy eye-salve, can not only trace God in the places of worship and in holy books, but can also see Him on land and sea; yes, even in a *field*. If the children of Adam were without a bible and would simply obey the yearly instructions given them from a "*field*," they would be exceptionally pious.

It might be profitable at this point, reader, for us

A FIELD

to notice some of the valuable lessons suggested to us by a field.

1. It calls our attention to the bountifulness of God, our heavenly Father. Where can we find a more striking picture of the unbounded liberality of God than a beautiful field, bestudded with vegetables, burdened with shocks of corn, or swelling with a sea of golden grain? The field, like its great Creator, also supplies all classes, both rich and poor, high and low, great and small, in both city and country, and on land and sea. All nations are in some way nourished from the field.

2. The next information brought to us through a field is in the fact that even though God does have in reserve great spiritual and temporal blessings for His children, yet there are certain conditions to be met before those blessings can be obtained. It is true a field will yield a rich harvest, provided the husbandman meets the conditions required to bring about a harvest. But if he fails to till his ground, sow his seed, and cultivate his crop, he will reap no harvest. So it is with the promised blessings of our kind heavenly Father, they are all conditional. The "willing and obedient * * * shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword," says the prophet (Isa. 1:19).

3. The next beautiful thought suggested by a well-cultivated field is as follows: It shows us how the grace of God can transform a wild, evil-tangled, sinful heart and life into a fruitful field and garden of blooming flowers. The prophet Isaiah made the

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following exclamation long ago: "The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as a rose."

4. A final lesson brought to us through a field is as follows: It shows us the only way by which the spirit of prayer, soul concern, and a hearty relish for the things of God can be retained; namely, by constant spiritual activity. If the husbandman would have a good appetite and not be a victim of indigestion, he must labor and toil, and by so doing will obtain a hearty relish for the product of his field. Equally so must the servant of God be active in spiritual things, if he would retain the spirit of prayer, the burden of souls and a hearty relish for spiritual things. There are hundreds of God's children throughout the land suffering from spiritual indigestion as a result of not getting enough spiritual exercise.

Reader, how is it with you?

V

JESUS SEEN IN THE FLOWERS

"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys"
(S. S. 2:1).

Inspiration here compares the Lord Jesus to the fragrant rose, which grew in Sharon. Sharon was a very fruitful place, where David's cattle were fed. It is also mentioned in Isaiah 35:2 as a place of excellency.

Among the many objects in nature which have been sources of inspiration to the writer, as well as food for thought, is the flower family. We know of nothing in the world that contains as many striking resemblances to the world's Redeemer as the flowers. In the following lines will be seen some of the many ways in which this is noticeable.

1. They frequently spring from a root in dry ground. However, before any beauty or fragrance can be discerned by the human family, it is first necessary for the root to pass through various changes and circumstances. So it is with Jesus. He is called a root out of a dry ground, having no beauty at all (Isa. 53:2), but when transplanted into our lives, and all the conditions of growth are complied with, He becomes the fairest among ten thousand and altogether lovely. To careless observers there is nothing in Christianity but a dry, uninteresting form, but

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those who have accepted the Lord Jesus have truly found a heaven below.

2. The next striking similarity between the flowers and the Savior is seen in their beauty and almost endless variety. The writer did not know the world contained such an immense variety of flowers until we visited enchanting California. There we saw flowers of numberless hues, growing profusely everywhere; even in the commons and byways. There is also endless variety and beauty in Jesus Christ, namely, loveliness, gentleness, tenderness, meekness, compassion, purity, light, life, etc. The devout soul who lives in the Spirit and walks continually with Jesus, discovers new beauties in Him each passing day.

* * * "What is love,
If this indissoluble bond that links
Me and my Lord forever be not love?
His costly, precious, infinite, divine:
Mine human, limited, and mean and poor,
And yet His inward Spirit whispers, true.
For what were all this gorgeous Paradise,
The music of these waters, and these bowers
Fragrant with fruitage, what were all to me,
And tenfold all, twice measured, without Him?
Without Him heaven were but a desert rude;
With Him a desert, heaven." * * *

3. A third way in which flowers resemble the Christ of God is in the way they attract, encourage and cheer the afflicted and disheartened children of men. We have all, no doubt, noticed how quickly gloom and loneliness can be dispersed from a sick-

JESUS SEEN IN THE FLOWERS

room and the sufferer's mind diverged from his misery by flowers. It seems to be the mission of flowers to scatter sunshine and gladness. Equally so is it the mission of the "Rose of Sharon" and the "Lily of the valleys" to disperse the gloom of sin and despair, and infuse life, light, hope and gladness into every home and heart. "Methinks if there were no other proofs in the world of God's goodness, the flowers would supply them in abundance. Answer it to thyself, poor soul, that doubts His love, that darest not trust the voice in thine own heart, telling thee that thy Father in heaven is all which that heart can adore. Why has He made these flowers? Why does He send to thee these little joys, as gentle and unnoticed, often, as a mother's kiss upon a sleeping child? There is not, it would seem, a conceivable reason to be given for the existence of flowers [at least for their beauty and perfume] other than the intention to provide for man a pure and most delicate pleasure."

4. A bunch of beautiful flowers will sometimes touch the hardest of hearts, and cause the coldest, crudest and most disagreeable person to smile and become friendly. So will the Lord Jesus when admitted into one's life. He will transform the lion into a lamb; the grouchy, touchy home devil into a loving, kind-hearted husband, pious father and good-natured employer; and the contentious, pouting, fault-finding, grumbling demoness into a loving wife, patient mother and agreeable neighbor.

5. The fact that roses, lilies, violets, pansies and

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similar flowers do not grow upon tall trees, but upon shrubs and vines near the ground, also reminds us of the lowly One who left the shining courts of glory and was born in a manger, slept in the wilderness, lived on charity, rode upon a donkey, washed the feet of His disciples, and died on the public highway (Matt. 27:39). Oh, what condescension!

6. We know not of a more beautiful and striking emblem of the purity and innocence of the Lamb of God than a snow-white lily. It would be quite difficult for a civilized human being to look upon this beautiful emblem of purity and not be reminded of Him "who did no sin, and in whose mouth was found no guile."

7. The lily retaining its purity, and keeping white amid contaminating elements, also reminds us of the power of the blood of Jesus Christ to *make* and *keep* mortals clean and holy in this present world. What saith the Scripture on this point? "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). I would have you attend to the full significance and extent of the term "purity." It is not abstinence from outward deeds of profligacy

JESUS SEEN IN THE FLOWERS

alone; it is not a mere recoil from impurity in thought. It is that quick and sensitive delicacy to which even the very conception of evil is offensive; it is a virtue which has its residence within, which takes guardianship of the heart, as of a citadel or inviolate sanctuary, in which no wrong or worthless imagination is permitted to dwell. It is not purity of action that we contend for; it is exalted purity of heart, the ethereal purity of the third heaven.

8. The delicate, dainty texture of the flowers also reminds us of the Savior's tender, gentle, Holy Spirit; and how carefully and softly we must walk before Him at all times, to retain His favor, and not grieve Him away forever. We are sure, that if men could analyze the history of those who have grown gray in iniquity, they would find that they began with just quieting conscience by a promise or excuse; with resisting the inward admonition in *little* and apparently *trifling* things; and thus they gradually took off, as it were, the edge of the weapon, and then they could resist in great things with as much ease as they had done in little things.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

VI

AN ORCHARD

Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits" (S. S. 4:13).

The fact that inspiration associates or rather compares the church of Jesus Christ to an orchard, verifies the fact that they at some point or in some way bear a striking resemblance. Let the reader now direct his attention to an orchard, and in the meantime take special notice of the comparison between it and the church of Jesus Christ.

1. The first thought suggested by the orchard is as follows: Fruit trees always seem to thrive much better when inclosed in an orchard than when left to grow wild in commons and byways. There are scores of professing Christians scattered throughout the land who have not made this wonderful discovery. Owing to their ignorance and blindness, they are opposed to *all* churches, and are exerting their entire forces opposing churches rather than striving to get sinners saved and believers sanctified. We are willing to admit that people should sever their connection with those so-called churches that go hand in hand with sin and the world, but not from those clean organizations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and made the model of life (Eph. 5: 25, 26).

AN ORCHARD

2. A second thought suggested by an orchard is the fact that all of the trees that blossom do not bear fruit. If the husbandman should judge by the number of blossoms decking the trees in spring time, he would no doubt have an abundance of fruit in the fall. But often almost two-thirds of the blossoms become affected in some way and fall to the ground, while at other times every blossom becomes affected and withers away. There are numbers of our good brethren to-day who are strong advocates of the doctrine "once in grace, always in grace," but according to the statements made in Ezekiel 3:20 and 2 Peter 3:7, and also from the fact that King Saul, after being converted, was lost (1 Sam. 10:9, 10), it seems to the writer that there is not only a possibility of falling from grace, but landing in hell if we do not watch and pray (Gal. 5:4).

3. Another way in which an orchard is characteristic of the church, is noticeable in the spring, when it puts on its beautiful robe of many hues. Oh, what a beautiful picture of purity! It reminds the writer of the following statement of the prophet Isaiah many years ago, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city." It also reminds us of that beautiful description given in the following words by the wise man of old, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

4. The delicious fragrance, carried through the land by the zephyr's viewless hand, is also a striking

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resemblance of the godly influence that sweeps over a community from a wide-awake, spiritual church. It is then a common occurrence for sinners to be converted, believers sanctified, the sick healed and the children of God kept healthy, happy and free.

5. Still another helpful lesson brought to us through the orchard is the fact that the largest and most delicious fruit does not always grow on the tallest or most attractive trees. Many times the sweetest and richest fruit is found on a small bush near the ground. This may explain somewhat why the sweetest and richest Christian experiences are not always found in the most well-favored, accomplished and gifted persons, but among the lowly, the unpretentious and common people. The world's Redeemer was from the despised city of Nazareth, John the Baptist from the wilderness, and the beloved John from the sun-baked, rock-strewn beach.

6. Though each denomination of fruit in the orchard be delicious, yet all do not have the same flavor. There are no two kinds exactly alike. So many of God's children are tempted over the fact that they are not like some one else, or because they can not sing, pray, testify or preach as others. There are many times when people lose their hold upon God and go to the altar seeking to be made like some one else, and the results are they never get any where. If all fruit were apples, what would peach lovers do? If all were plums, what would we do for cherries? It is true, pears are an excellent fruit, but we do not care for them at every meal.

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7. There is also in an orchard some *early* and some *late* fruit. How wisely God acts in this respect! He does not let all the fruit get ripe in the same month. If so, we would at one time have a feast and at another time a famine. He uses the same good judgment in blessing His children in religious meetings. He rarely ever blesses them all at the same time. Usually He blesses a part of them at one meeting and others at the next, and still another company at the next meeting. If He should bless them all at the same time in every meeting, they would unconsciously drift into spiritual pride, and independence. Hence, by blessing them at separate times, great benefit is derived. Those who fail to get blest with the first company usually put in time searching their hearts to see if they have let down or compromised on any line and thus have gotten off blessing ground. Therefore, by this apparent oversight of Jehovah, they are made to tighten up their harness, drive down their stakes deeper, pray more constantly and resolve to walk more closely with God in the future than in the past. When it comes the first company's time to be apparently slighted and unblest, they will also be affected in a similar way, etc.

8. It is no great difficulty during fruit time for even a stranger to find the trees that contain the sweetest fruit, for there will be the greatest number of clubs, brickbats and stones in and about them. This thought, to some extent, may explain why some people in the church are everlastingly

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club-thrown, slandered, hen-pecked and persecuted. People forget when praying for *great grace, wonderful power, and great gifts*, that these things are usually accompanied with great responsibilities, great persecution, great temptations and a life-long, uncommon fight with the devil.

VII

SURFACE SPRINGS

"And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs" (Josh. 15:19).

God has given us not only beautiful lessons on holy living from the planets, trees, fields and flowers, but there are also valuable lessons to be gathered from objects deeply hidden in mother earth. One denomination of these from which we may gather many helpful lessons for the child of God, is the spring of water.

It was reported some years ago, that beneath a certain city in the south a large river was discovered, a hundred or more feet below the soil. Almost any well digger can inform us that on digging a well of any great depth he sometimes strikes several surface streams before getting down to bed rock and the living stream. In many instances, those who are inexperienced in well digging, stop on finding one of these surface streams, thinking they have struck the living stream. However, after doing so, they invariably have trouble.

1. The greater part of the time they have muddy water. 2. They are quite frequently annoyed because of the irregular flow of the water. 3. During long dry spells they have no water at all.

Is not this a perfect picture of those who when

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digging a spiritual well, stop before striking the living stream? While we paraphrase it, notice how uniquely their religious life harmonizes with the description given. (a) Muddy water the greater part of the time: That is, they do not possess a sky-blue experience, but are constantly troubled with doubts, fears and uncertainties. At times they feel that they are all right and at other times they think they are not. (b) They are not only troubled with muddy water, but are also annoyed with an irregular flow of water. Sometimes it flows quite freely and again it dwindles down to a very small stream; that is, sometimes they have quite a bit of joy and peace, and at other times they have none. This brand of joy, however, is not the joy of salvation but circumstantial joy, for it depends largely upon environment and financial condition for its preservation. When the purse is full, circumstances favorable, and friends increasing on every side, the water flows profusely; but when the tide changes, it changes. How about this, reader? (c) During long dry spells no water at all. Reader, do you frequently strike a long dry spell in your Christian experience, where you can not feel any joy nor hear from heaven? If so, the trouble is this: you need to take the pickax of earnest prayer and dig down to the living stream where your experience will not be affected by the various changes. Rainy seasons then will not cause the water to become muddy, neither will droughts run the spring dry, but you will have an even, unceasing flow the whole year through. In

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other words you will be like "a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters faileth not" (Isa. 58:11).

VIII

THE DONKEY'S REBUKE

“And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?” (Num. 22:28).

In the lesson before us we have one of the most marvelous occurrences that has ever been recorded in either sacred or profane history. Think of a dumb ass suddenly speaking out with man's voice!

Since the reader is, no doubt, quite familiar with the story, we will not take the time to repeat it but will proceed to mention some of the helpful spiritual lessons taught therein.

It plainly teaches us first, that when ordinary methods fail in the hands of God to turn us from our *self-willed, headstrong*, determined course, He proceeds to use extraordinary methods. Often illness, misfortune and sudden death, which are so distasteful to the human family, are nothing more or less than God's rescue party, sent out to head us off and prevent our plunging into a lake of fire and brimstone.

Second. It also reveals the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit in reproving men of sin and disobedience. He is never at a loss for an instrument through which to speak. In this instance there

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seemed to have been no priest, Levite or prophet at hand through which He could speak to the headstrong prophet; therefore, rather than leave him without warning to go on and be slain, He caused the ass to speak with man's voice.

Oh, the numberless methods God is using in this our day to check souls on their hellward course! He is speaking through dreams and visions, thunder and lightning, catastrophes, wars and pestilence in every land. Oh, who will heed the warning voice of God, and turn before he burns.

Third. In this marvelous story will also be found quite a bit of encouragement for those of God's children who consider themselves dull, awkward, ignorant and slow of speech. If God could make the dumb ass speak plainly, smoothly and correctly, can He not help you also, reader? Notice what He said to His servant Moses on the same subject: "And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? * * * Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Exod. 4:10-12). "Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I can not speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces:

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for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord” (Jer. 1:6, 7).

Fourth. Balaam’s conduct at this time also reveals to us the fact that there is a possibility of our becoming so determined, headstrong and set on carrying out our plans that *our own self-will* will make us too blind to recognize God working in an unusual way to stop us. Balaam was so enthused and anxious to go with Balak’s men, that he not only rushed by an inward check of the Spirit, but also failed to notice anything *uncommon* in the dumb ass speaking. Any ordinary man, on hearing the ass speak, would have dismounted and fled, thoroughly frightened; but Balaam did not appear in the least startled, but entered right into conversation with her as though she had been a person.

Oh, the blindness, hardness and deafness of self-will! It has rushed many heedless souls beyond the bounds of mercy and pardon.

So many times the minister, pious parents and friends have admonished and plead with self-willed people, not to take this or that step, not to pursue this or that course, etc., but in spite of it all they rushed on beneath the angel’s flaming sword and were slain.

“There is a line by us unseen,
That crosses every path:
The hidden boundry between
God’s patience and His wrath.

“To pass this limit is to die;
To die as if by stealth;

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It does not quench the beaming eye
Or pale the glow of health.

“Oh! where is this mysterious bourne
By which our path is crossed;
Beyond which God Himself hath sworn
That he who goes is lost?”

IX

THE ONE EWE LAMB

"And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him" (2 Sam. 12:1-4).

Nathan's unique parable contained not only enough pointed truth to pierce the steeled heart of a backslidden king, but also has a message for the children of Adam in every age. It gives in brief one of the most striking descriptions of selfishness that we have ever beheld. Almost every one who reads this story is ready to exclaim with King David, "As the Lord liveth the man that hath done this thing shall surely die." And yet, if we would make a close investigation, we would discover that nearly one-third of the human race is, to some extent, guilty at this point. It is true, they may not be guilty of committing adultery and murder, yet, they are guilty of committing some little unkind act of

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selfishness, which according to James (2:10) places them on the same plane with the man who took the poor man's lamb.

Let us prayerfully and thoughtfully notice in the following lines some of the many indirect ways this brutal act is being repeated in the age in which we live, for in this investigation we may discover that we ourselves are guilty of a similar offense.

1. If a person takes the advantage of his poor neighbor's circumstances and forces him to sell his goods below the market price, simply because he is in need of money, or because it is getting late in the season, or because for some reason he is compelled to break up and leave the city; for any one to treat his poor neighbor thus is, in a way, taking the poor man's lamb.

2. Should a man of humble circumstances have in his possession a piece of real estate, a patent or a copyright that was rapidly increasing in value, and which in a few years would bring him a fortune, and should a man of means take the advantage of his ignorance and buy it from him at a low figure without first informing him of its present value and future prospect, it would be another way of taking the poor man's lamb.

3. Still another way of committing this heartless act of selfishness is when we have unemployed money on hand and a poor neighbor or brother needs a small loan to tide him over a hard place, and before accommodating him we demand his home or furniture for a pledge, or exact a heavy interest,

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while at the same time his family is destitute of the necessities of life. Notice what God has to say at this point: "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as a usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury" (Exod. 22:25). "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee" (Lev. 25:35, 36).

4. Yet another way of slaying the poor man's lamb is, if while we have a sufficient income to cover our needs, or have money in the bank, we go to church and have them lift an offering for us, pretending to be in destitute circumstances. The greater part of this offering would of course be given by the widows and people in worse circumstances perhaps than ourselves. Hence, this would be a unique way of reserving our flocks and herds, and slaying the poor man's lamb.

5. Still another way of committing this diabolical act of selfishness, is when the proprietor of a large concern sells his goods below the market price with no other end in view than to draw away customers from his neighbor, who is engaged in the same line of business, only on a smaller scale.

6. The following act of selfishness is also worthy of a place in this article. When a man of ordinary ability writes a composition and it becomes quite popular, and in the meantime a more

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accomplished writer, realizing the success with which it is meeting, imitates the work as far as possible and claims the authorship. This is not only selfishness, but down right stealing.

7. If your poor neighbor should advertise a house, farm, horse or piano for sale, and you should meet a customer inquiring the way to that man's residence, and instead of giving him the desired information, you begin telling him of a similar article that you have for sale, this would be another way of taking your poor neighbor's lamb.

8. A final way of reserving your own flocks and herds and slaying the poor man's lamb, is when persons with a reasonable portion of this world's goods, conceal the fact and take advantage of the public charities, namely hospitals, poorhouses, old people's homes, etc. This class of people, of course, have more prestige with the authorities than the poor. For this reason, many times these institutions are largely filled with people of means, while those who are really in need are crowded out. Some months ago, in the city of Chicago, in a cheap, religious lodging-house for the poor, a man died with a bank book on his person containing six thousand dollars. According to the writer's judgment, this was a clear case of a rich man reserving his own flocks and herds and taking the poor man's lamb, offering it as a sacrifice to his covetousness.

Reader, are you in any way guilty at this point?

X

SAMSON'S FOXES

"And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives" (Judges 15: 4, 5).

If we were allowed to give this little narration a spiritual title, it would be as follows: "*Results of a Spirit-filled Life.*" There are several things connected with this lesson that greatly remind us of the operations of the Holy Spirit upon believers in the present dispensation.

1. The first manifestation of supernatural power noticeable in the story is seen in the capturing of the three hundred foxes. If it should have been three hundred sheep, goats, hogs, cats or dogs it would be no great marvel; but any one who has ever engaged in chasing foxes and has become acquainted to any extent with their shyness, shrewdness and swiftness, will readily admit that it required more than mortal power for any one man, yea, forty men, to round up and capture such a great number of foxes. No doubt the spiritual lesson God wishes to teach us here is this: no matter how ignorant, wicked, fearful and wild sinners may

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appear, the blessed Holy Spirit through His obedient children can round them up and bring them to God. Think how quickly He rounded up not only three hundred, but three thousand skeptical Jews on the day of Pentecost through one sermon. Think how uniquely He rounded up the lion-hearted Saul, and sent him forth to scatter holy fire in every land. Think how He rounded up Whitfield, Fletcher and Wesley, and sent them forth to kindle watch-fires on land and sea, to burn forever. Oh, hallelujah to the Lamb!

2. The flaming-tailed foxes, running to and fro, strikingly prefigured the conduct of the Spirit-filled believers in the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. As soon as these foxes caught fire they began to run. It was so with the disciples on the day of Pentecost, and it is "just the same to-day." There is no time for loitering and lounging around when our hearts get filled with holy fire. If we should not be permitted to preach in the church we will preach in the streets and byways. If we can not go to foreign fields, we will go from house to house, praying, exhorting or handing out tracts. It is just as impossible for a Spirit-filled soul to lie idle as it would have been for those foxes to stand still while the firebrands were tied to their tails. Reader, if you are loitering around and idling away God's precious time, there is no doubt about it, your fire has surely gone out.

3. You will notice that the fire was not attached to their heads or to the middle part of their

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bodies, but to their tails. This was done, no doubt, to prevent them from "*backing up*," and to cause them to *go forward* continually. Their going was not spasmodical, but they kept pushing *onward* every minute. They had to keep on the run to keep the blaze from turning upon them. What the church needs to-day is a lot of fire-baptized, Spirit-filled men and women to run to and fro, and plant the cross in every land.

4. The next point of interest regarding the mission of the foxes was this: they burned such a wide swath wherever they went that it could not be doubted for a moment that they had passed through the community. They affected the corn fields and also the vine and olive yards. "Corn" at this place, spiritually speaking, would stand for the *commercial* side of life, while grapes and olives represent the *domestic* and *social* side of life, since wine and oil are both used as symbols of joy. This plainly shows us that Holy Ghost religion touches all sides of life. Nowadays, on visiting a community just after a large modern revival has closed, it will be quite difficult to discover a single sign of its effect upon the community. The reason for this, however, is because the foxes were not on fire. They ran through the corn, it is true, but left no shocks burning behind them.

5. Samson did not send the foxes out single-handed, but sent them in companies of two. The present-day church, as yet, has failed to realize the vast importance of sending her workers out in com-

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panies of two. Jesus sent the disciples in companies of two. The Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabus and Saul, for the work," etc. Where the Bible says, "One shall chase a thousand," it also infers that *two* can put *ten times* that many to flight. Can anything be more clear than this? The reason, no doubt, why this method is not carried out more fully these days is because many of the workers are so self-willed and headstrong that no one can work with them. This is due to their losing the fire.

XI

THE LOWING KINE

"Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: and take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return Him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. And see, if it goeth up by the way of His own coast to Beth-shemesh, then He hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not His hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us. And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: And they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. And the kine took *the straight way* to the way of Beth-shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left" (1 Sam. 6:7-12).

Oh, what a mint of spiritual wealth there is hidden in this brief story!

It contains a great many high-class, spiritual lessons for the children of God in every walk of life. Reader, let us narrowly scan it from end to end and glean up all soul food possible.

1. The first valuable truth to which it opens our eyes, is how *uniformly* and *smoothly* things work when we strike the current of God's will, when we get in divine order and set our faces in the right di-

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rection. The sea instantly became calm after Jonah had been thrown overboard and went gliding toward Nineveh in the "whale-car." The Philistines were astonished to see these untrained cows submit so readily to the yoke and go straight forward; not to the pasture, not to their calves but toward the land of Israel, the home of the ark of God. Much of the up-hill work and fruitless efforts of thousands of professed Christians to-day is due to their being out of divine order and in the land of the Philistines. They are trying to run the "car of salvation" without throwing off the break.

2. The next thought suggested here is that God does not confine Himself to any *one* method, but has numberless methods that we have never thought of, with which to propagate His work. There are many good people to-day who are greatly tempted to cast away their confidence and doubt the work of God already wrought in their souls, simply because they did not see the same light, hear the same voice or receive the same kind of a divine manifestation that some one else received. They must remember that God may at one time use a rod and the next time a jaw-bone and still later use a "smooth stone." It would be too monotonous for Him to use the *rod* in every case. It is true, He rarely ever condescends to use *big methods, big crowds, high-toned people* and *great and wonderful things*. The reason for this, however, may be because He is so great and wonderful Himself. He also seems to take a special delight in using small, common, awkward, ob-

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tuse and contemptible persons; especially those who appear to be so in their own eyes.

3. A third thought brought to light here, is how quickly God can sever the cords of human affection, cravings for companionship and creature consolations, especially when they interfere with His plan and the salvation of souls. No one would have believed that these cows would voluntarily turn their backs on their bleating young and travel so freely in the opposite direction. The fire of God in a human soul will cause him to gladly turn his back on home, loved ones and friends, and go to the ends of the earth, if need be, to rescue precious souls.

E'en tho' the field lie far from home,
O'er mountain peak and ocean foam,
Where serpents hiss and tigers roam,
I'll gladly go; just give me souls.

4. The next helpful lesson suggested through the cows carrying the ark of God is this: God calls not only men and unmarried women to carry the gospel, but sometimes calls also those with families. The prophecy of Joel still holds good even in the present dispensation, when the ministry of women is being so greatly opposed (Joel 2:28).

5. This beautiful story does not only contain a fertilizer for faith and courage, but also warns the children of God in brief to beware of yielding to the spirit of *curiosity* and *irreverence*. The men of Beth-shemesh had not the slightest idea that their hurried look into the ark would be rewarded with such severe judgment. Oh, how many times the pur-

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pose of God has been thwarted and hundreds of souls sent down to the flames on account of God's people foolishly yielding to the spirit of curiosity. This was the chief instrument in the hands of the devil with which he overthrew Mother Eve, turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt and moved King David to number Israel. The blighting bane of *curiosity* has dwarfed the growth of many a precious soul and withered their grapes of joy.

XII

DAVID'S LION AND BEAR

"And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he rose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear" (1 Sam. 17:34-36).

David's combat with the lion and bear strikingly prefigures the two great spiritual conflicts that every son and daughter of Adam must wage before inheriting the kingly throne and the crown of life. The story at first sight, to casual readers, leaves the impression that he slew both the lion and the bear at the same time, but it is not so. If we were allowed to modernize the statement of David here, it would read as follows: "A lion came upon my flock, and seized a lamb; I ran after him, he attacked me, I seized hold of him by his shaggy locks, smote and slew him, and delivered the lamb. A bear came in the same way, and I attacked and slew him."

Let us now proceed to make the spiritual application. The lion here would represent the devil who goeth to and fro in the land, not only to mislead and frighten, but also to destroy every son and daughter of Adam. David overcoming and slaying him typifies the victory Jesus gives over Satan and

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sin to every believer at conversion. John said, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." This victory is not to be spasmodic or temporary, but permanent. This fact is evidenced by the *death* of the *lion*. It was not only wounded and captured, but slain. The victory gained at conversion over the world, the flesh and the devil, by believers need never be lost.

David did not stop at slaying a lion, but declares that he slew a bear also. The reader will please notice that there is a vast difference between the disposition and nature of these two animals. While the *lion nature* strikingly represents the workings of Satan in the heart and life of the unsaved, the *bear nature* represents the carnal mind, namely, carnality.

Let us now notice some of the many ways in which the disposition of a bear and the inclination of carnality are quite similar.

1. The bear resembles carnality in the way it hugs and squeezes its victim to death. A bear will hug a man until he drops upon the ground as limp as a rag. Just so will carnality, in the heart of a believer, if not gotten rid of. It will gradually crush out of them all of the spiritual life and cause them to die without a squeal, or an external wound.

2. A second way in which a bear strikingly resembles carnality is in the way it can abstain from food. It is reported that a bear can live the whole winter through without any food. Whether this be true or false, we know, however, that carnality can

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exist for years on an occasional bit of *commendation*, *eulogy* and *public notice*. It is like the ants, who live many months on crumbs.

3. The bear also resembles carnality in the way it grips its victim with its teeth. The writer once heard of a bear growing angry and gripping the keeper with its teeth, and rather than release its hold tore the flesh right off his limb. Every person who has ever sought the experience of holiness has realized to some extent how tenaciously anger, pride, jealousy, self-love, self-will and other traits of carnality hold on to the soul. It generally requires a mighty siege of fasting, praying and dying out to break their hold. It required about ten days for the disciples to shake *out* and *off* these spiritual bears.

4. A final way in which bears resemble this subtle foe, is in being so hard to kill. It was remarked by huntsmen years ago, that a bear could stand almost any amount of shots in the body. The only successful way of killing it is to shoot it directly in the head. How true this is when applied to the old man! There seems to be absolutely no other way of putting him to death but by dealing the death-blow upon the head. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

XIII

THE OX

“As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle” (Ezek. 1:10).

In the above text and also many other places in the Word of God the ox is used to prefigure some of the various graces that were to characterize the life of the Pentecostal Christians. In the following lines I wish to call the reader's attention to some of these graces by way of paraphrasing the character and conduct of the ox.

1. The first noticeable one of these excellent qualities is this: the ox is *always ready* for sacrifice or service, night and day, without manifesting the least degree of resistance. It does not shirk or shift duty onto its fellow ox, but is always ready to take its own place and bear its own burden.

2. The next excellent quality seen in the ox is in the fact that it is so easily cared for. It is much easier to keep three oxen than one horse, for the following reason: The horse has to be grained, strawed, led to water, curried, shod and supplied with harness; while the ox can be worked all day and turned into the pasture at night for its supper. It would be a fine thing if some evangelists, preachers and religious workers would take a few

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lessons from the ox at this point, and learn how to avoid being a nuisance and being so hard to entertain in the various homes in which they stop.

3. The next quality seen in the ox, which we consider well worthy of being imitated, is as follows: The ox is not fractious, impatient or given to kicking, pawing and biting, but is gentle, docile, kind and obedient. Neither is it balky or spasmodic, but pulls steadily and evenly in the yoke. Some people are willing to bear responsibility for a while, provided it does not continue too long. There are others who have frequent spells of *balking, looking back*, kicking up and running away.

4. Still another commendable characteristic seen in the ox is this: it is not given to prancing, skipping around and flurrying, like a self-conceited horse, but steps *softly, carefully* and *surely*. Therefore, for this reason, the ox rarely ever slips, loses its foothold or falls to the ground. People who step *carefully, surely* and *prayerfully*, rarely ever backslide.

5. Again, when the burden becomes unusually heavy, or a steep hill is to be surmounted, rather than balk or kick out of the yoke, the ox is said to go quietly to its knees and make a greater effort than ever to move the load and surmount the hill. Reader, have you learned to do likewise when the burdens of life are heavy?

XIV

THE HERD OF SWINE

"But when he [the man with an unclean spirit] saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped Him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the most high God? I adjure Thee by God, that Thou torment me not. (For He said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.) And He asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought Him much that He would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought Him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea" (Mark 5: 6-13).

Some teachers insist that the truth taught here is that the devil is still in swine flesh, and therefore it is not to be eaten. Let this be as it may, we must all frankly admit that it is unwholesome as well as unhealthy.

From the writer's view-point the lesson contains a deeper truth than simply forbidding the use of swine flesh.

It is to be borne in mind that the swine in many places in the Word of God is used to prefigure sin and moral pollution. Therefore, in viewing the les-

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son from this standpoint we have made the following discoveries:

1. The first helpful thought suggested through this incident is this: all devils and unclean spirits are in perfect subjection to the Son of God, and can not even molest the most insignificant creature upon the earth without first getting the Savior's permission. The devil could not touch Job or his possessions without obtaining permission from God. Neither can he harm any of God's little ones to-day without first getting His consent.

2. The next fact revealed in the lesson is as follows: Satan is such a helpless and defeated foe in God's universe that he can not propagate a single sin, unless he can first get some rational or irrational creature (though ever so small) to co-operate with him by giving him embodiment and allowing him to carry on his destructive work through them. He was unable to harm the holy pair in Eden until he found lodgment in the serpent. The question may arise here: Why did the Savior thus give the devils permission to enter the swine when He knew they were powerless to do harm without embodiment? He no doubt permitted it to teach us the lesson which I have just mentioned; so that we might be aroused to more steadfastly resist him. He could not have used a more useless creature with which to teach us this lesson than a hog. He here used the swine, just as the housewife sometimes, in distributing rat poison, uses the most useless tin plate she has.

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3. The lesson also informs us of the great capacity of the human heart for retaining good or evil. Who would believe that *one* unconverted man's heart contained enough devils to drive two thousand hogs frantic? Is it any marvel that the prophet made the following remark: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

4. This lesson also strikingly suggests the downward course in which Satan and sin leads fallen man. They lead him from the image of God to the level of the lowest of animals, and on from the brute plane over the precipice into hell.

5. Finally, the devils and the swine plunging headlong into the sea, fittingly typifies the purification of the earth and the final overthrow of Satan and his subjects in the lake of fire and brimstone. The reader will please notice how perfectly the Scripture harmonizes with this thought. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophets are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. * * * And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14, 15). "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

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Oh, what a description of the countless human swine that are now grazing upon the earth!

Matthew 25:41 gives us a brief description of how the Savior will send away this wicked throng from His presence, light, joy and love, just as He sent away the devils.

XV

THE TIED COLT

“And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, He sendeth forth two of His disciples, And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find *a colt tied*, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him” (Mark 11: 1-4).

This short narrative contains so many beautiful thoughts that we can not here insert them all, but will hurriedly mention a few of those which we consider most worthy of attention.

1. The first thought suggested through the tied *colt* is as follows: It fittingly represents the point where every sinner in the world stands to-day; namely, at a place where two ways meet. No matter how far out on sin's mountain they have wandered, or how deeply dyed with guilt they may be, it is still in their power, and at their option, to choose one or the other of these “ways;” either the narrow way that leads to heaven, or the broad way that leads to hell. Every unsaved soul in the world, no matter how rich, poor, high, low, moral or vile, is daily standing at the fork of these two roads.

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Reader, decide to-day which one you will take, for to-morrow may never come.

2. The lesson not only shows us *where* the sinner stands, but also reveals his deplorable condition. It says, "*The colt was tied.*" Unsaved reader, you may feel free, act free and make your boasts of being free, nevertheless, you are tightly bound with chains of sin, habit and unnatural appetites. It is true you may frequently make new resolutions, but despite all of your efforts to master your depraved appetites and passions each ensuing year finds you still tied at the fork of the roads.

3. The next thought suggested here is this: at the command of the Lord Jesus Christ the long bound captive may be set free. It matters not with what he may be bound, or how many years he has been bound. At Christ's command the sinner can instantly be made "*free indeed.*"

4. These beautiful words, "The Lord hath need of him," should be a source of encouragement to every sinner and backslider upon earth. Satan often suggests to these unfortunate ones that they have sinned away the day of grace and passed the boundary line of mercy and pardon, but the text says, "The Lord hath need of him." Reader, this includes you. It does not matter how vile you have been or how ignorant and worthless you may be at present, the Master can loose you, spread the garment of righteousness upon you and use you in His vineyard and whitening fields. Oh, will you at this moment give Him a chance? Think for a moment

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upon these beautiful words, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17).

5. The last thought suggested here, through the disciples loosing *an unknown man's* colt, is as follows: Soul winners are authorized by the King of kings to loose sinners anywhere, everywhere and at all times, whenever the opportunity presents itself, and God will take care of the results. The command of the Savior is, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23). The apostle Jude said, "And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire" (Jude 22, 23).

XVI

THE STRAYING SHEEP

"All we like sheep have gone astray" (Isa. 53:6).

The prophet here likens the whole human race to straying sheep. Why did he not compare them to straying horses, straying cows, or other animals? However, should he have done so his parable would have lost its significance. For there is something in the conduct of straying sheep which is quite different to that of any other animal.

Let us briefly notice some of the strange actions of a sheep when going astray that are quite different from the conduct of any other animal, and yet, strikingly similar to a straying human soul.

1. If a horse, cow, dog or cat should stray from home, it would more than likely find its way back again. It is said that if a man while riding or driving a horse should lose his way, all he has to do is to slacken the reins and the horse will lead the way home. It is not so with a sheep, for it becomes so bewildered that it would wander forever and never find its way home again. Is this not a striking picture of the sinner straying from God? Except the Good Shepherd, who came to seek and save that which was lost, overtake and rescue him, he will stray forever.

2. The straying sheep not only becomes too dull

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and bewildered to find its way home, but will wander farther and farther into the dark and tangled wilderness. Oh, think of the many once innocent boys and girls, who gradually began to stray from home, the Sabbath-school, the church and parental advice, and who are to-day far away in the gloomy wilderness of sin.

You're drifting from God, drifting from God,
From purity, heaven and Jesus my Lord:
You're drifting from God, drifting from God,
Far, far away on sin's ocean broad.

3. It is said that a sheep when lost will not lie down and rest like other animals, but will continue to push its way with increasing speed on through the mire, muck and tangle until it falls exhausted upon the ground.

Think! In spite of all the prayers, tears, preaching and advice of Christians, also the wooing and pleading of the Holy Ghost, the thoughtless sinner rushes on farther and farther into the wilderness of sin until he falls exhausted upon a bed of affliction. The Good Shepherd has overtaken and rescued millions of His straying sheep in this damp, gloomy valley.

4. A final thought connected with a bewildered, frightened sheep in a wilderness is the fact that it offers no resistance whatever when attacked by some vicious beast. A horse, cow or dog will resent the foe, but a sheep will send up a volley of pitiful cries and yield to be slain. It is astonishing how freely and unresistingly the sinner yields himself to

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Satan to be bound hand and foot, and led away to a lake of fire and brimstone.

"A great fold stands with its portals wide,
The sheep astray on the mountain side,
The Shepherd climbs o'er mountain steep,
He's searching now for His wandering sheep.

"Then, why will ye die?
Oh! why will ye die?
When the Shepherd's fold is so near by?
Oh! why will ye die?"

XVII

“DOGS EAT THE CRUMBS”

“And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but He could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet: The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto Him, Yes, Lord: Yet *the dogs under the table* eat of the children’s crumbs. And He said unto her, FOR THIS SAYING go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter” (Mark 7: 24-29).

If we were to search the Bible through from cover to cover we would hardly find a more striking lesson on humility than this. Many, nowadays, on being called a dog by an entire stranger, would consider it a gross insult and walk away. But this woman instead of allowing pride to thwart her errand, rather gave place to humility and stooped lower still. Her great humility affected the Savior more than a thousand half-hearted, Pharisaical prayers. It, no doubt, pierced His great heart of love and sympathy like a dozen arrows.

Among the many classes of people with whom the Savior came in contact while upon earth, sharing their burdens and sorrows, were three individ-

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uals whose faith and humility surpassed that of any others recorded in the New Testament. The circumstances, too, under which they were brought to public notice were among the most pathetic, heart-touching scenes ever beheld by mortal eye.

Let us briefly look them over, and the reader can then decide more fully as to whether the above statement is true. The first one of these remarkable characters of which we write, was that poorly clad, lonely, hunger-bitten widow, who one day in the temple when the Lord's offering was being taken, threw in all the living that she had. Notice how the passage reads: "And He looked up, and saw the rich men casting in their gifts into the treasury. And He saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And He said, Of a truth, I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had" (Luke 21:1-4).

The next one of these characters was that poor woman who for twelve long years had lain beneath the steady grind of disease, she who had spent all of her living upon physicians and was no better. Oh, see that faint, disease-ridden, worn and weary soul pressing her way through the crowd, and making a final attempt to free herself from the iron hand of disease, which for many years had held her fast. Lo, she stretches forth her trembling, bony hand with hope and confidence and touches the Savior's garment and instantly is made whole.

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Shall we now reflect and see what inspiration had to say about this heart-touching, pathetic scene? "And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before Him [Oh, what humility!], she declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately. And He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace" (Luke 8: 47, 48). Figuratively speaking this is a case where *faith* and *humility*, combined in a human soul, astonished infinite wisdom.

The third individual who has a share in this immortal honor, and who was worthy of a place among heaven's queens of humility, is the Syrophenician woman, who refused to become insulted over being called a dog, but assented to it by saying, "True, Lord" (Matt. 15:27), and thus humbled herself still more. The Savior who was infinite in wisdom knew that she was in possession of this almost unparalleled degree of humility, but He used this strange circumstance to exhibit it to the world so that mortals in all ages might seek to obtain this wondrous grace.

Now, since the Lord Jesus used the dog parable to sound the depth of her humility, let us briefly turn our attention upon a dog under the table gathering up crumbs.

1. The first fact connected with him in his humble position is, he is *at the feet of every one* present. Reader, have you anything like this in your dispo-

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sition? Are you struggling to *climb higher* or *dig deeper*?

2. The dog does not *demand* the crumbs or do any *dictating* but, with great patience, silently waits upon providence to send the crumbs his way. "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

3. It matters not how thickly or rapidly the crumbs may fall, the dog does not grow proud and self-conceited. Notwithstanding all favors conferred upon him, he does not get out of his place, but is still satisfied to be a *dog*. Success and prosperity do not puff him up, neither do slights, neglects or misusages change his nature. After all happens that can happen in both the success and the failure worlds, he still feels unworthy, and but a dog. Reader, is this dog more human in his actions than you, and are you more doggish in your principles than he?

XVIII

THE CHAMELEON (Lev. 11:30)

The conduct and disposition of this peculiar little animal, when spiritually applied, is such a perfect picture of some of the religious people whom we have met that this little volume would not be complete without giving at least a brief description of them.

We will first mention some of its most attractive features and then make the application.

1. The chameleon has a soft, knobby skin, and the familiar power of changing in color. Under the outer skin are two layers of cells holding coloring matter, the outer light yellow, the inner brown to black. These cells are controlled by the animal's nerves, and at will can be made to change places and the cells next to the skin expand, and thus the color changes. If it should rest upon a green bush, it will change to a greenish color, and if it chances to lodge upon a brown or reddish colored bush, it will immediately assume these colors. The reader has no doubt met some of these creatures in human form, who not only jump from one church or denomination to another, but also change views, beliefs and religions every time they jump. When among Methodists they were Methodist, when among Baptists they were Baptist, when among Come-outers they

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were Come-outers, and when among devils, they were devils.

2. A second noticeable feature in the make-up of this animal is, it has a long worm-like, insect-catching tongue which can be thrust out like a dart, and which is the most active part of the animal. Equally so is it with the human chameleons, they are usually quite active with the tongue on almost any subject, especially "meddling with other men's matters." They are strong talkers on religious subjects but quite deficient when it comes to *living the life*.

3. The tongue of the chameleon is club-shaped at the end and covered with a sticky fluid with which it unerringly catches its prey at a distance of several inches. The tongue of the human chameleon is also covered with an oily, sugarish flavor with which he captivates, deceives and misleads immortal souls. His eloquent language, wide experience and great learning make him all the more dangerous.

4. Its large side eyes, with round lids, leaving only a small opening, are also very active, and can be quickly turned every way. No doubt, the reason why the human chameleon jumps so frequently from mission to mission, church to church, and conference to conference, is because its eyes are larger than its heart. All it seems to see as it jumps from place to place are the faults, failures and shortcomings of its brethren. It does not seem to be in possession of an ounce of kindness, sympathy or brotherly love, neither does it give its brethren

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credit for having any good traits of character whatever.

5. The little animal of which we are now reading also has large lungs, so that it can puff out its body into marked plumpness. The human chameleon, too, has a unique way of making people believe he is spiritually fat, by giving them an occasional baptism of nice, high-sounding, windy words. He also has the art of speaking in a touching, appealing, pathetic manner, so as to make his hearers believe he is blest, melted and moved upon by the Spirit of God.

6. Again, the animal's habit of thus blowing itself out, taken along with its power of fasting, gave rise to the old belief that it fed on air. Whether this be true or false, we know not, but one thing we do know, and that is this, its human posterity live largely upon air; that is, upon the windy, unsubstantial arguments of carnal-minded men.

XIX

THE PREPARED WORM

"But God *prepared a worm* when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God *prepared a vehement east wind*; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live" (Jonah 4:7, 8).

The book of Jonah is short, we admit; however, it is brimful of spiritual lessons. The prayerful, studious reader will find in it many a spiritual nugget of gold.

In meditating upon the life of Jonah some time ago, the writer was much impressed with the *four preparatory courses* which God took him through before conferring upon him the immortal honor of conducting the greatest revival of all ages. These courses were given, no doubt, to root, ground and prepare him for the coming tidal wave of honor and criticism, which was as wide as the world and as long as time. If the religious workers of the present day had more hardships and difficulties to surmount in the earlier part of their Christian experience, they would not be so easily capsized by the winds of success and public favor. A person who suddenly becomes prominent in spiritual work, without first having at least some degree of hardships, is similar to one who suddenly comes into

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possession of a fortune. The sudden cloudburst of worldly glory is likely to sweep him off his feet. Whereas, if he should have begun at the bottom of the ladder and come up gradually through labor, tears and toil, he would be more prepared to weather the storm.

The first preparation made for Jonah by the Father of lights will be found in the seventeenth verse of the first chapter. It reads as follows: "Now the Lord had *prepared a great fish* to swallow up Jonah." This was, indeed, a strange ordeal, and yet nothing less than this would have placed Jonah in divine order on the streets of Nineveh. Often times, the things we consider misfortunes are nothing more or less than the whale of providence, sent to carry us to Nineveh, the divinely-appointed field of duty. Reader, are you having numberless misfortunes, accidents and mishaps along the highways of life? If so, look about you and see if you are not on the road that leads to Tarshish rather than Nineveh.

The second preparation made by God for the prophet will be found in the fourth chapter and sixth verse. It reads as follows: "And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief." There is a world of truth contained in this verse. The first lesson brought to us by the *vine* and *shadow* is that all of our temporal blessings, such as food, raiment, wealth, homes, etc., are as unsubstantial and tem-

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porary as a shadow. The vine at this point represents all of the temporary blessings which God has provided for the comfort of man. The lesson also reveals to us the fact, how quickly our hearts may be turned from God and become attached to the perishable things of life. Who would have imagined that Jonah would become attached in so short time to such a trivial thing as a vine? I repeat it, this lesson shows us all how quickly the things of earth will turn our hearts from God. Along this line the path to heaven is paved with spiritual wrecks. We shall never forget the pathetic words of the apostle Paul addressed to Timothy during his last imprisonment. They are as follows: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica." Again he writes, "O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."

The third and fourth preparations which God made for the prophet will be found in the fourth chapter in the seventh and eighth verses. These are the ones especially which seemed to be such a trial to Jonah, but after all proved to be the greatest revelation of God's mercy.

The first effect the worm had upon Jonah was to cause him to again fix his attention and affections upon God. He had become so taken up with the gourd vine that he got his eyes off God. Therefore, instead of the worm doing him an injustice by destroying the vine, it had done him a great favor.

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This is often the case nowadays with many of God's children when He permits the winds of financial success to blow their way. They become so taken up with the new home, the piano, the auto, and their dividends that in order to prevent their going suddenly into an idolater's hell, God sends the worm of misfortune to quickly destroy the vine.

The next valuable lesson to which the prophet's eyes were opened by the worm and wind, was the boundless love of God. This little circumstance awakened Jonah to the fact that God's love for humanity far surpassed that which he professed to have. The mirror of God's unbounded love reflected Jonah's real condition and showed him that he had more love for his *reputation* than he had for the *souls of Nineveh's lost thousands*. Where God wanted to save the people because they were repenting, Jonah wanted to destroy them to prevent them losing confidence in him and branding him as a liar.

A final lesson we are taught here is this: no matter how great a sinner we may be, or how severe the temporal judgment God has pronounced upon us, if we will repent and humble ourselves in the dust before Him, He will turn from His fierce anger and bestow upon us a blessing. "The Lord will not always chide neither will He keep His anger for ever."

XX

ELIJAH'S RAVEN

"And the word of the Lord came unto him [Elijah], saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there" (1 Kings 17:2-4).

Our attention is again called to some more of the hitherto unexplored resources of Jehovah. Before this we have been hearing of how He fed the children of Israel for forty years in the wilderness with bread from heaven, gave them water out of a flint rock, and caused their wearing apparel to last forty years, but in this chapter we have made a discovery. Doubtless, it would not have been difficult for Elijah to readily believe that God some times prompted His people to administer to the wants of His children, but it never once entered his mind that God was so concerned about him, away off in that barren land, that He would commission a raven to come and supply his daily needs.

Reader, let us carefully study this story and see what light and truth it may contain for us.

1. The first lesson that comes to the surface is this: it assures us of the fact that no matter how destitute our circumstances or how far away from home and friends we may be, or how difficult it may be to reach us, God always has a way of sending us

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relief. When Abraham was far away from home and friends, and greatly in need of a ram to sacrifice, God called his attention to one caught by the horns in a thicket. When Samson was famishing for water, God opened up a spring in a jawbone to quench his thirst. When Peter was greatly concerned about "tribute money," the Savior did not send him to the bank, but to the sea to get it out of the mouth of a fish. O reader, think of the unexplored territory in the field of faith, and also the numberless undiscovered resources of the great God! Let us never again question or doubt Him.

2. The next thing worthy of our attention in the lesson is the humility and submission of the prophet. Should he have been proud, prejudiced and hard to please, he would not have accepted the food from the raven. But his great humility caused him to thankfully receive it, even though it was delivered in a common manner. There are people to-day, like Naaman of old, who are willing to be saved, healed or blest only in their own church, and only in their own way. But God wants His children clothed with that degree of humility that will enable them to accept food from a raven and lap water from a humble stream.

3. This narration also teaches us that preachers and religious workers who are devoting their entire time to spiritual work should not, as a general thing, eat more than two meals a day. The lesson says, "The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the *morning*, and bread and flesh in the *evening*"

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(1 Kings 17:6). There are but few workers who have discovered the fact that *overeating* is no small hindrance to spirituality. It beclouds the mind, begets sluggishness, feeds passion, fetters the spirit, dwarfs the soul and hinders it from daily mounting on the wings of prayer and faith.

4. The next thought that impresses the writer in this lesson is the promptness and punctuality of the ravens in performing their divinely-appointed duty. Verse six infers that the meals were served on time, namely, *morning* and *evening*. Their punctuality will no doubt be quite a reproof to some of our good brothers and sisters who perform the work of the Lord in a careless, slipshod way, at least it should be. They are behind in nearly every thing they undertake. When the time comes to go to church they are not ready. When the time comes to pay their dues, they are not ready. When the time comes to send their missionary offering, they are not ready, and when the time comes to go to camp-meeting they are still not ready. I wonder if they will be ready when the time comes to die.

XXI

THE EAGLE'S NEST

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him" (Deut. 32:11, 12).

Since the eagle is used so frequently in the Scriptures as an object lesson for the children of God, my purpose in this chapter shall be to closely study its disposition and character, and then make a few spiritual applications.

The first thing regarding the eagle's conduct that is worthy of imitation is, it does not take chances by building its nest on movable things. It does not build in sheds, barns, shrubs and trees like other birds, but flies away to the mountain peak and there builds upon the crag of the rock (Job. 39:28). Oh, that men would be equally wise and not risk their immortal souls by building upon such movable things as wealth, honor, fame and false religion! In the hour of death, Mr. Vanderbilt, with his multiplied millions, awoke to the sad fact that he had built for eternity upon the quicksand of worldly gain. Jesus said, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and

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the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matt. 7:24).

Second. The eagle, too, has a high regard for the *brightest light* and *clearest place*. It has no relish for darkness or shadows, but insists upon living where all is clear. Dark clouds must not get between it and the sun. It is said that the eagle beholds the sun with open eye, and such of its young as through weakness of sight can not behold the sun, the eagle rejects as unnatural. According to the testimony of the Lord Jesus ages ago, there is quite a contrast between the eagle and some people, for He said, "Men loved darkness rather than light," and then proceeded to give the reason why, "because their deeds were evil."

Third. The eagle is also noted for its keen eye. It sights the foe miles away and keeps out of reach. God also wants His people to be shrewd and eagle-eyed so as to spy sin at a distance and shun it as a deadly poison. Jesus said, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

A fourth commendable feature in the conduct of the eagle is its shrewdness in going for prey. It generally goes about noon, when men have gone home to dinner and shepherds have slackened their

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vigil. The eagle at this time darts down, seizes a lamb or kid, and hurriedly flies away to the mountain. Oh, that men were as wise in winning souls! The eagle is also very subtle in capturing its prey, for having filled its wings with sand and dust, it settles on the horns of great beasts and by its wings shakes the dust in their eyes, whereby they become an easy prey. How necessary it is for God's people before going out in search of souls to tarry before Him in prayer, and get their souls refilled with love and power, so that when they come in contact with the unsaved they will be captivated and won by their Spirit-filled songs, prayers, testimonies and sermons.

Fifth. The next interesting truth in the life of the eagle, which is quite similar to the Christian, is the existing enmity between the eagle and the dragon. The eagle seeks to kill it, and the dragon breaks all the eagle eggs it can find, then speedeth to its den, and there hides itself. This is too self-evident to need any comment.

Sixth. The eagle is said to preserve its nest from poison by having it in a peculiar stone. There is no safer way for the child of God to be preserved from the poisonous errors that are afloat in the land to-day than by keeping the Word of God, not only upon the center-table, but in the heart. Paul said, "Let the words of Christ dwell in you richly." It will surely prove a lamp to our feet and a light to our pathway.

Seventh. It is also said that unless the eagle is

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unusually hungry it does not devour all of its prey, but leaves a portion for the other birds which follow. Reader, have you this kind of a disposition or have you one similar to the little animal whose name is spelled with the following three letters of the alphabet—h-o-g? If you have a disposition similar to the eagle, you do not defer having lunch or dinner until the unwelcome visitor has gone, neither will you leave him in the parlor while first one and then another of your family slip out into the dining-room and eat on the sly. How about that, reader?

Eighth. The next valuable lesson taught through the experience of the eagle is the fact that it takes the greatest trial of its life to get it into its *God-ordained element*. When the eagle is young, it can only be taught to fly by being rudely thrown out of the nest by its mother. Hence, in its desperate struggle to keep from falling to the ground, it discovers the fact that it possesses two little wings which are capable of riding upon the wind and plowing its way from pole to pole through the trackless firmament. Often times the trial or cross which we so much dread is the one God wants to use in teaching us how to operate the wings of *submission* and *trust*, and thus rise above the clouds of worldly cares. Quite often He tears up the nest of "old homesteads," "thrifty business enterprises," "good-paying positions," "well circumstanced" situations, "finely fixed" conditions, etc., so as to free us from all bondage to the creature and created things, and

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places us where we can live the life of heaven on earth.

Ninth. It requires constant opposition to keep the eagle above the clouds in a clear sky. If it were not for the wind opposing the eagle's every stroke, it would never be able to surmount the clouds and live beneath the meridian smile of the king of day. So it is with the child of God, it requires a certain amount of opposition and hardship to cause him to mount up on the wings of prayer and faith and abide in a crystalline sky.

"They flourish in fire, on the floods mount the higher,
Who are trusting in Jesus, their King."

XXII

ABRAHAM'S "BIRDS OF PREY"

"And He said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And He said unto him, Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old. and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away" (Gen. 15: 7-11).

In this chapter we have one of the most accurate descriptions to be found in the Bible of the experience and process souls pass through when seeking holiness. In the seventeenth chapter of Genesis and first verse, Abraham was commanded to walk before God, and be perfect, but it appears that he received the blessing in the fifteenth chapter.

Let us briefly notice how perfectly the conditions which he had to comply with harmonize with those required of seekers of holiness in the present dispensation.

1. Abraham was commanded to make a *complete sacrifice*. The reader will please notice that every animal allowed or commanded to be sacrificed under the Mosaic law is found in the above list.

ABRAHAM'S "BIRDS OF PREY"

This *complete sacrifice* must be made by all who receive the "burning lamp experience." Moses made it when he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Heb. 11:24-26). The disciples made it when they "*left all*" to follow the lowly Nazarene. Saint Paul, too, counted all but dross for the excellency of the cross, and the fathers of Methodism also left all to follow Him whom their souls loved.

2. Another interesting feature noticeable in the conduct of Abraham is this: he not only made a complete sacrifice by putting all upon the altar, but also remained right by it, drove away the birds of prey, and kept them from polluting it. It is astonishing how many seekers of holiness allow their sacrifice to become polluted and the purpose of God thwarted by these annoying "birds of prey." These "birds of prey" may well be classed under the following heads: "Fear of man that bringeth a snare," "Keeping back part of the price," "Looking back at burning Sodom," "Shirking the cross," "Evading the plain way," "Fearing the call of God." All of these thoughts and many more flock around the seeker like so many vultures to pollute his sacrifice. Sometimes, through neglect, these "birds of prey" are allowed to get in and pollute the sacrifice of many, even after they have received the blessing.

Reader, let us stay right by the offering, rudely

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beating them away, until the fire falls and consumes the sacrifice.

The next point of interest connected with Abraham's experience, which is quite similar to the experience of the present-day seeker of holiness, is when he passed through the stage of *darkness* and *unconsciousness*. He not only consecrated and kept the birds from polluting his sacrifice, which was *his* part of the work, but also waited until God performed *His* part of the work, which was to crucify the old man, purify the heart, and baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire. This is what every seeker of holiness receives when he gets "true holiness." But the trouble nowadays is this: many are in such a great hurry to profess holiness that they place all upon the altar by way of consecration, and then even while the "birds of prey" are in the act of carrying away part of the sacrifice, they will arise from the altar and claim to be sanctified wholly without ever waiting for God to perform any part of His work whatever. Is there any marvel that the whole land is corrupted with shallow holiness?

XXIII

THE CROWING COCK

"Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice" (Matt. 26:34).

The text is found among those in the Bible which sometimes cause the reader's heart to grow heavy and his eyes to fill with tears, besides causing a feeling of carefulness and precaution to settle down upon him, especially when he reflects upon Peter's disastrous fall.

My aim in this chapter shall be to mention a few important truths regarding the little fowl upon which the Savior has conferred the immortal honor of having its name recorded in Holy Writ.

The reader may be somewhat surprised on being told that the cock is one of the strangest and most mysterious fowls in the world. Where this may be a rather strange statement for city people to accept, it will not be so for close-observing country people. There are some old-time farmers in the country who can tell by the crowing of the cock when to expect good or ill news, when to expect rain or sunshine, when to expect strange visitors, and also when to expect sickness and death in the family. Let us notice some of the commendable characteristics of this mysterious fowl.

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1. He is a faithful herald throughout the entire year. No night is too dark, stormy or cold for him to herald the news of approaching *midnight* and *morn* to slumbering mortals. Besides, he keeps up a tireless vigil over the house and barnyard throughout the livelong day. He has a strange squall with which he signals his comrades and owner, too, when hawks, crows and eagles are in the vicinity. He also notifies his owner with a quick cackle, when dogs, minks, woodchucks or strangers are approaching the yard.

Reader, are you as faithful in the performance of your divinely-appointed duty in the world as is this fowl of which we write?

2. The next commendable feature in the conduct of the cock is, he is too greatly concerned about the performance of his divinely-appointed duty to sleep the whole night through, but frequently awakes and gives glory to the King Immortal with "songs in the night." Reader, are you wanting at this point? Remember, Paul and Silas sang and gave praises to God at midnight. "Oh, how strict and self-denying a life was that which the holy fathers lived in the desert! How long and grievous were the temptations they endured! What frequent and earnest prayers did they offer up to God! What rigid fasts they kept! What great zeal and fervor they had for their spiritual progress! By day they worked, and by night they had long seasons of prayer and praise. Nowadays, he is thought to be extremely pious who just escapes open sin, or bears

THE CROWING COCK

patiently his lot in life." Are we stirred to make greater effort because of these reminders?

3. A third praiseworthy characteristic seen in the little fowl of which we are writing, is his self-forgetfulness. He rarely ever gets fat, owing to being so generous and giving nearly every thing to others. Whenever he scratches up a bug, worm or grain of corn he quickly summons his friends to come and enjoy it, while he stands by and looks on with delight. It appears from reading the thirty-first chapter of Job and the sixteenth and seventeenth verses that Job was also thoroughly cured of the cancer of selfishness. Notice how it reads: "If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have *eaten my morsel myself alone*, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof * * * let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade."

XXIV

"DEAD FLIES"

"Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor" (Eccl. 10:1).

What a repulsive picture the Spirit has drawn here! and yet, it is brimful of meaning. There is hardly anything with which we come in contact that will so quickly curb our appetite, even for the most delicious food, as a dead fly. It will instantly transmute the highest degree of delight into prejudice and contempt.

If we use the picture here drawn as a mirror we can readily see how a little *lightness, folly, foolishness* or *jesting* on the part of a pious person will impress and affect the unsaved. Some religious people have formed the idea that jesting, trifling and joking a little with sinners would cause sinners to esteem them more highly, but it is a sad mistake. It is true, the sinner himself may be given to any amount of frivolity and lightness, and yet at the same time he will be greatly surprised to find the servant of God faulty at the same point. He expects to receive reproof from the child of God rather than to be encouraged in his frivolous conduct. He is not only disappointed, but also disgusted when the servant of God acts otherwise.

“DEAD FLIES”

Reader, did you ever stop to think that one light word or one frivolous act will kill the effect of the best prayer, strongest testimony or most powerful sermon? Many a minister has delivered a powerful and effective sermon, and then killed the whole effect by making some light or foolish remark.

Oh, how careful the people of God should be in ordering their conversation aright in their every-day lives, and not kill their influence for good with those with whom they associate. Many prayer and testimony meetings have been dry and lifeless because the members of the church were engaged in too much light talk before they came to the meeting. Often times the minister has failed to strike fire in his sermon because of the fact that before coming to church he acted light and frivolous with the young people where he was invited to supper. Oh, how many times the precious ointment has been spoiled, and a special meeting killed, because of some secret or public act of folly in a man or woman of God. Hundreds of times the blame for failure has been laid upon God when it was due to some light or frivolous act on the part of the leaders of the meeting. If we would not have the holy ointment send forth a stinking, repulsive odor, we must live careful, watchful and prayerful lives every moment, and every where.

Paul, the apostle, exhorted the Ephesians as follows: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and

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meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1, 2).

"Oh, sacred state of religious service which makes a man equal to angels, pleasing to God, terrible to devils, and worthy to be commended by all the faithful."

XXV

THE ANT

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard: consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?" (Prov. 6:6-9).

We know not of a more fitting object lesson with which to reprove the sluggard than the little insect whose name forms the caption of this chapter. No doubt, the attention of the sluggard is called to this little insect with the hope that he might reflect, see himself, and reform.

The reader must not mistake the meaning of the wise man here and conclude that he is only referring to that class of men who fail to till their fields; the parable means this, we admit, but it also means much more. It is to be borne in mind that there are two classes of sluggards in the world. One class are those who fail to labor for the necessities of life, while the other class are those who neglect the welfare of their immortal souls.

Now, since Solomon has especially called our attention to the ant family, let us closely study their nature and various characteristics and see what helpful information we can obtain.

1. The first thought that dawns upon the mind of the writer regarding this little family, is as fol-

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lows: hundreds of them can live together under one roof without *pouting, quarreling, growing cold* and *distant* or *fighting*. This phase of their conduct is worthy of the attention not only of the sluggard, but also of many who profess a high degree of Christianity. How about things in your home, reader?

2. Our attention is, no doubt, called to the conduct of the ant family because of their almost unparalleled industry. They are by no means lazy or slothful, but exceedingly diligent. In Texas there is a kind of farming ant, which is said to plant, cultivate and harvest a kind of grain. These ants are often seen carrying a burden much larger than themselves, and are willing to work night and day. They are far from being like some professed Christians who do the work of the Lord perfunctorily, and besides want pay for almost every little thing they do. It is to be remembered, however, that people of this type are not Christians but hirelings; not sheep, but wolves; not doves, but vultures, seeking prey.

3. The next commendable characteristic possessed by the ant, is its unselfish disposition. If it finds something good, it does not hide it in a corner for its own personal use, but instantly goes and notifies its fellow laborers. In a very short while hundreds of its comrades will appear on the scene to enjoy the feast. This would surely be a blessed world to live in if even all of the church people were like the ants in this particular.

4. The next high-class quality noticeable in the

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conduct of the ant which is worthy of being imitated, is its serious reflection and forethought of the unknown future. The ant does not fail to act while it is called to-day; neither does it neglect, while the sun is shining, to prepare for the approaching long, bleak winter. Oh, what a rebuke to careless, thoughtless sinners who are squandering their golden moments in the bypaths of sin and folly! Reader, will the following lines be your death-bed testimony?

"I've missed it at last," he repeated,
While the shades of despair gathered fast;
"My hopes are forever defeated,
I've missed, I've missed it at last!

"The thief on the cross I remember,
Ne'er refused till the summer was past,
And now in death's chill December
I've missed, I've missed it at last!"

XXVI

THE HONEY BEE

"And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion" (Judges 14:8).

It is no marvel that the Lord Jesus has said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," for truly, when we get our hearts purified and our spiritual eyes opened, we see Him in everything and every place.

It is also true, that those whose chief desire is to live for God are never lost for an opportunity to perform their pious duty, or ever left without helpful instructions along the way.

Among the many helpful object lessons seen as we pass along the highway of life is the busy honey-bee.

Let us notice some features of its conduct that, when spiritually applied, greatly resemble the conduct of a child of God.

1. The first is, the class of *food* upon which the bee is sustained. It does not feed upon herbs, as other insects do, but exclusively on honey. So it is with the children of God, they can not feed on the husks of the world, such as shows, parades, entertainments, picnics, etc., but must have exclusively the honey of spiritual things.

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2. The next valuable lesson brought to us through the conduct of the bee is this: it is impossible for it to engage in fighting *without losing* something. We are told that whenever it engages in a conflict, it always loses its sting. If fighting would serve the children of God in a similar way, it would be rather commendable, but it works directly opposite. For when they engage in brawling, contention and strife, they always lose their honey and receive in return a poisonous sting. We admit they have made excuses for this sting by giving it the following names, viz., "*firmness*," "*positiveness*," "*plainness*" and *being out-spoken*, but nevertheless it is the same old sting.

3. Another amusing fact about the bee which is quite similar to the conduct of the people of God, at times, is this: whenever the hives become too full the bees begin to migrate and swarm. Therefore, reader, whenever you see a church split brooding or a lot of tempted members applying for their letters, you may well conclude that one of two things is causing the trouble, the devil has either gotten in or the hives are *too full*. However, it may require a few months of close observation to fully determine whether the new faction will continue in the honey-making business or bite, devour each other, and perish.

4. The next way in which the bee family greatly resembles the Christian family is in the fact that they continually need a leader. Unless they have one, nothing is accomplished. It is true, they may

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swarm around and make a lot of noise but will never settle down to the honey-making business. It would certainly be a great blessing to the church of God to-day, if more of our good brothers and sisters would come into possession of this knowledge and forever refrain from criticizing and opposing the ministry—God's appointed leaders.

5. The bees are frequently robbed of their honey is the next truth that is equally suggestive in the bee life. This sad misfortune, however, does not necessarily affect the general appearance of the hives, bee-yard, etc. The bees, too, may still swarm around and go in and out of the hives as they did before the honey was taken away. Where is the one who has not seen some religious person going to and fro in the work of the Lord, trying to keep up a good appearance, even after they had been robbed of their honey and armed with a sting?

Reader, is this your case to-day?

XXVII

RESULTS OF A RASH REMARK

“Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (Matt. 4:7).

In one of the middle states lives an elderly woman, who is stricken with a strange affliction. In some respects it greatly resembles that dreadful malady called leprosy. She is covered from head to foot with a mass of dry scabs which are of a greenish color. At times her misery is so great that she writhes and twitches like a worm in the fire. She declares that there are times when her whole body feels as though she were in a literal furnace of fire. She has been in this critical condition for many years and seems unable to obtain any permanent relief. Several ministers of the gospel have visited and prayed with her but no lasting relief is ever obtained. God seems to have set her up for a mark upon which to wreak His vengeance and then to have turned a deaf ear to all prayers offered in her behalf. Her condition so impressed the writer of these lines that he inquired among her acquaintances to find out the underlying cause of this strange affliction, since the unfortunate woman neither dies nor recovers, but remains the same year in and year out. Our inquiry, however, revealed the following fact: We were told that many years ago, at the death-bed of her unsaved husband, she became

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so enraged against God for taking him that she publicly made the following remark: "I wish I could die and go to hell with him!" These rash words entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and notwithstanding the fact that a period of nearly forty years has elapsed since that time, He did not forget to visit her with marked judgment. It is true she has not gone to hell as yet, but of a truth hell has come to her.

There are hundreds of people afflicted in different ways throughout the land to-day, who, no doubt, if the truth were known, are afflicted for a similar reason, namely, making rash remarks and complaining against the great God of heaven and earth.

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14, 15).

XXVIII

A SHADOW

“All my members are as a shadow” (Job 17:7).

Man’s stay upon earth is so short and there are so many valuable lessons to learn before he goes hence, and besides his intellectual powers have been so dwarfed by sin, that God has harnessed up every thing on earth and is daily using them in the school of providence to instruct him in the way of life.

A shadow at first sight is quite an insignificant thing, and yet God has made mention of it in His Word not less than fifty times. When a shadow is carefully studied, it contains some helpful lessons. Let us notice them briefly.

1. God, in one passage of Scripture, uses the shadow to more fully acquaint His children with His nearness and protecting power. We have all, no doubt, learned how to appreciate the shadow of a tree on a hot summer day. Well, this is what God offers to do for our souls. Notice how the promise reads: “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (Psa. 91:1). “And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isa. 32:2).

2. The next valuable lesson which the shadow

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contains for mortal man is this: Since it is a phantom, which is the most unsubstantial thing in the world, it serves as a fitting emblem with which to compare this present life and all created things. No matter how they may attract us with their beauty, we are ever to remember that they are but shadows and are hastening to be gone. What saith inspiration at this point? "Man that is born of a woman is of few days. * * * He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (Job 14:1, 2). "My days are like a shadow * * * and I am withered like grass" (Psa. 102:11).

3. Still another valuable lesson brought to us by the shadow is this: It so beautifully reminds us of the fact that there are two sides to this present life of chance and change, so that we may not be too greatly confused when the various changes come upon us. We must remember that every visible substance upon earth has a shadow, that is, a light and a dark side. Earth's greatest joy contains some sorrow, her brightest day is succeeded by a dark night, her greatest gain is followed by some loss, her dearest friendship is shadowed by a foe, her sweetest song contains a sigh and her most enchanting music has some discord.

XXIX

DEFYING GOD

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked” (Gal. 6:7).

In the northern part of New York state once lived a company of pious, God-fearing people, who were strict observers of the Lord's day. In the same community lived an infidel who greatly opposed them by using his influence to poison the minds of the neighbors against them. He insisted that there was no wrong whatever in working on Sunday, and said he would convince all in the community of the fact through a crop of wheat which he was then planning to sow. He said he would prepare the ground on Sunday, sow the grain, reap it and also draw it to the barn on Sunday, and so he did. It was about two o'clock one beautiful Sunday afternoon, when he got the last load into the barn. It was an ideal afternoon and the sun shone wonderfully bright. But in a few moments, far off in the blue vault, a small pillar of white cloud was seen floating slowly and majestically until it finally settled over the farmer's barn, when a streak of lightning swept down, set the barn on fire and burnt it to ashes.

“Not so sternly, haughty spirit;
Lay thy loftiness aside;
From thy forehead smooth the furrow,
From thy heart pluck out the pride.”

XXX

AN ACHAN IN THE CAMP

“Be sure your sin will find you out” (Num. 32:23).

One of the charter members of a certain church in the south died a few years ago leaving, in substance, the following testimony: For many years she was an active member in the church, one who professed no small degree of piety. However, it appears from her own testimony that she had never received a change of heart, namely, the “new birth,” but had played the hypocrite for upwards of thirty years. Before giving the following testimony she was stricken with a lingering malady and gradually grew worse as the days went by. As her end drew near, her guilt and condemnation became too great to conceal any longer. So on the day preceding the day of her death, she began to confess her sins and talk out her heart, the substance of which was this: “Though I have been for years a member and worker in — church, I have never been right with God. It is true, I have been looked upon as mother of the church and always assisted in preparing the candidates both for baptism and also the sacramental emblems, but all the while I possessed a wicked heart and was living in open sin. I have been the instigator of the downfall of many young women, and besides I have frequently committed murder to

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cover up their shame." She paused a moment and then proceeded as follows: "I realize that you think I am delirious and do not know what I am talking about, but in order to convince you that I am not, I will make the following prediction; if it comes to pass, then you will know that I was not delirious, but perfectly normal: I am going to die to-morrow at eleven o'clock, and just before that hour a thick, black cloud will hang over this city. Mark you! the wind will blow terrificly and the thunder roll and the lightning flash, but not a drop of rain will fall. And when you see the lightning flashing and hear the thunders crashing, I shall then be entering the confines of hell." She ceased speaking and spent the night in quite a restless condition. The next day, between ten and eleven o'clock, just as she had said, the heavens grew dark and clouds hung heavily over the city. The wind also blew furiously, but not a drop of rain fell. Sure enough at eleven o'clock there was an awful electric storm. The thunder roared and the lightning ran wild through the black, cloud-draped vault, and in the meantime this lost soul was passing through Jordan's chilly waves into a world where Hope and Mercy are strangers.

XXXI

DEATH OF THE INTENDED BRIDE

"I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number" (Job 5:8,9).

If there is ever a time or place along the highway of life where a human being seems to have a just reason for censuring the Creator, it is when an *intended* bride or groom is suddenly nipped away by the reaper death. Of all of life's sorrows, burdens, heartaches and briny tears, this seems to be her most bitter cup for Adam's race. Disappointed fancy, covetousness, pride or revenge, deserve no sympathy whatever, but oh, the pangs of disappointed love!

The writer is willing to admit that this is no faint blow to a heart that is buoyant with hope and aflame with conjugal love. But if we were permitted to see things from the view-point of our heavenly Father, "who is too wise to err and too gracious to be unkind, and who is also arranging everything in heaven and earth for the infinite good of man," I am sure we would see things in a different light and change our views to some extent. It must ever be borne in mind that our heavenly Father quite often sends us blessings in disguise.

Let us now notice some of the many reasons why He may think it best to pluck this much-admired

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flower at this particular time and thus prevent it from being woven into the wreath of love.

1. He, being omniscient, may be conscious of disabilities and hidden defects in one or the other of the parties to be joined in holy matrimony, which if permitted to remain in the hot-bed of time, would completely wreck the lives of both of them, and besides would send their souls to hell. It would be far better for many persons to-day if they were in their graves rather than yoked up with the incarnate demon or demoness who has blighted their life and filled it with shoreless gloom.

2. God's all-seeing eye, which scans heaven and earth at a glance, may behold beneath the bloom of the gallant young man, germs of drunkenness, gambling, wife-beating and murder, which only time and opportunity would develop. On the other hand, His all-seeing eye may discover, deeply buried in the heart of the intended bride, pernicious germs that time and provocation would develop, thus transforming her into a street-walker, fashion-fiend or foul harlot. Therefore, instead of it being an act of cruelty on the part of God in nipping these flowers in the bud, it is an act of great kindness.

3. His third reason for plucking this beautiful flower, disappointing love and staunching the spring of bridal-joy, may be to prevent a God-called, God-appointed and God-anointed herald of the gospel from getting out of divine order and being hindered for life. It would have been a great act of kindness on the part of God, if He had used this method to

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preserve the usefulness of many ministers, gospel workers and missionaries who are to-day hampered for life in this respect. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).

XXXII

ILL-GOTTEN GAIN

“And with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Matt. 7:2).

As strange as the statement may appear to the reader, there is something about ill-gotten gain that inflicts a penalty and punishment upon men on this side of the river of death, yes, long before they reach the tribunal bar of God. Instead of the afore-mentioned wealth bestowing the great blessing upon men which they anticipate, it rather hastens their irreparable doom. If the real causes of the loss of many lives in boat disasters, automobile and railroad wrecks were fully known to the world, we would discover that ill-gotten gain had the greatest hand in them. It is absolutely a matter of impossibility for any one to wrong his fellow creature and then escape being severely punished in the world in which he lives.

When the writer was a boy, playing in the streets and byways with his playmates, he was more than once convinced of the fact that whenever he cheated or took the advantage of them in any way, he would come out the loser in the end. The same rule holds good to-day with God's grown-up boys and girls. The cause of many blasted crops, shrunken markets, lost limbs, lost health and

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blighted lives may be traced back to an unfair deal somewhere along the highway of life.

We once knew a prosperous farmer who swindled his stepmother, younger brothers and sisters out of their share of a large estate and in less than three years he lost the whole thing and became a servant for the people in that community.

Many a man has commenced to build a mansion with ill-gotten money, who never lived to see it completed. Equally so has many an ill-gotten dollar been invested in oil wells and mining stock that never was heard of again.

Reader, if you would be on the safe side for both time and eternity, do as the good book says, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matt. 7:12).

XXXIII

A HUMAN SKELETON

"Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews" (Job 10:11).

Where is the man or woman to be found upon earth who can withstand and proudly throw off the appeal of a human skeleton? There is hardly anything in the world that speaks more loudly to busy mortals than this human ruin.

At first sight it strikes a death-blow to pride and self-esteem. In an instant it reveals the folly of idolizing fair cheeks, pretty teeth, winning eyes, beautiful hair and a lovely form. It substantiates the fact that "fairest flowers fade away, youth and beauty soon decay, and mortals have not long to stay."

This trophy of death is not only a great rebuke to pride and self-esteem, but is also one of the most eloquent reasoners in the world. Its arguments are brief, it is true, but they will cause the most unconcerned and thoughtless sinner on the shore of time to seriously reflect. The words "God," "eternity," "heaven," and "hell" seem to be written upon every atom of a human skeleton, and are read and fully understood by all nations, kindreds and tongues.

This human ruin is also one of the greatest advocates of "equality." Upon it there is left no trace to evince the fact whether its possessor was once

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rich or poor, high or low, learned or unlearned,
comely or uncomely, Jew or Gentile, bound or free.
All such marks of distinction have vanished away.

“Behold this ruin! ’Twas a skull
Once of ethereal spirit full,
This narrow cell was life’s retreat;
This space was thought’s mysterious seat.
What beauteous visions filled this spot?
What dreams of pleasure long forgot?
No hope, nor joy, nor love, nor fear
Have left one trace of record here.”

XXXIV

HEAVEN INSULTED

"And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6:3).

Some years ago, while engaged in evangelistic work in western Pennsylvania, we were requested to call and pray with a sick man who was anxiously seeking the Lord. It was a lonely, country home, situated in a valley near a streamlet which stole its almost unobserved way between the rock-ribbed hills to the far-off sea. This murmuring streamlet seemed to join the lonely home, the solitary bridge, the barren trees and the doleful hills in singing their rueful evening song of woe. They all seemed to be engaged in singing the requiem of some doomed spirit, some God-forsaken soul.

The sun shone faintly, the clouds looked melancholy and sad, the winds seemed fast asleep, the turtle-dove, too, took up a doleful wail, while all nature seemed draped in weeds of woe.

On entering this lonely home we saw a devoted wife whose meager form was almost worn to skin and bones, keeping loving vigil at the bedside of an old, gray-headed man whose fever-scorched frame shook beneath the pressure of years. This man, though nearing his three-score years and ten, was unsaved and without God and hope in the world. We knelt before the throne of grace and humbly im-

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plored and besought, in his behalf, a pardon from the King of kings, but our hearts remained cold, our petition died on our lips and all heaven seemed to softly whisper "no." The man prayed, too, and seemed greatly concerned about his soul, but all to no avail. What was the trouble? The Spirit had been grieved, light rejected, and heaven insulted. One of the neighbors informed us of the fact that some time previous to this, during a series of revival meetings that were being held in this community, the Holy Ghost so impressed this man to get right with God that he became angry and said to the Spirit one day, "I'll fix you!" He then entered a saloon and purchased a glass of liquor and hurriedly drank it down so as to avoid being annoyed any further by the Spirit. Then and there the tender, brooding, heavenly dove took its flight to never return again. Thus were the words of the wise man fulfilled to the letter in his case. "When distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me" (Prov. 1:27, 28).

XXXV

THE DEATH-BED

“Yea, though I walk through the valley * * * of death, I will fear no evil” (Psa. 23:4).

It is true the church is an excellent place to hear of the ways and dealings of God. The church is also a great place to hear convincing arguments on the subjects of eternity, heaven and hell. There is also another place situated in this brief world of shadows that surpasses even the church in this respect. This place is known throughout the civilized world by the striking title “Death-bed.” Of a truth, with the exception of the Holy Spirit, this is the greatest religious instructor in the world. A deeper religious impression is made upon all classes at this point than at any other place.

Reader, let us pause a few moments and lend an attentive ear to this resistless preacher, and hear what it has to say.

1. It seems that men will not accept any great degree of information regarding the uncertainty of earthly gain from any other source or messenger but the death-bed. It is at this point only that they realize, with the wise man of old, that “All is vanity.” This is the only place on earth where heaps of gold, corner lots, railroad stock, oil wells, government bonds and diamond fields are dropped with contempt.

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2. The death-bed not only convinces the children of Adam of the vanity and uncertainty of earthly gain, but also convinces them beyond a shadow of doubt regarding true and false religion. It is true there is a possibility of men taking up with a false religion and thus allowing themselves to be deceived for a while. But it is a rare thing for a soul to go out of the world deceived, to die thinking he is going to heaven when he is going to hell. The death-bed, the flaming-tongued orator, makes him know well before leaving this world, whether he has built upon the rock or sand.

3. Aside from the altar of God, the death-bed seems to be the only point where men's consciences are fully awakened, and also where they obtain a clear conception of righteousness and truth in its highest sense. There is something about death and eternity that will cause the most ungodly man to become serious and speak the whole truth. Previous to the dying hour, men may have refrained from confessing their past sins and misdemeanors to the bottom, but on nearing the margin of death they will then be honest if they never were so before.

4. The death-bed is also the greatest revealer of human weakness to be found upon the shore of time. While in the bloom of health men frequently boast of their strength, ability, courage and beauty. But when scorched by fever, racked with pain, and terrified by the ghost of an evil conscience, they become as weak as water, and as timid and helpless as a child.

THE DEATH-BED

5. At this point the mighty reasoner, death, causes all nations to realize the blessedness of a godly life on the one hand, and the curse and irreparable loss of a life of sin and folly on the other. No one at this point was ever known to regret the fact that he had lived for Jesus Christ, neither was any one ever found to glory in the fact that he had served the devil and spent his brief stay upon earth in sin. This is the point upon earth where men generally receive a tremendous foretaste of heaven or hell.

“Death is the vile worm that gnaws the root of all of man’s happiness serene, the gall of all his sweets, the thorn of every rose of earthly bloom, cloud of his noonday sky, frost of his spring, sigh of his loudest laugh, dark spot on every form of loveliness, rank smell amid his rarest spiceries, harsh discord of all his harmony, reserve of every promise and the ‘if’ of all to-morrow.”

XXXVI

ADAM AND EVE

“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Gen. 3:7-10).

Genesis is called the “book of beginnings,” and so it is, for here we have a brief history of the first backsliders and the beginning of sin. The conduct of Adam and Eve in this narration is sufficient evidence that the flight of time does not alter character or take out the warp of sin.

Notice a few interesting facts about these two persons. It was only one small act of disobedience which caused them to lose the favor of God and thus become sinners. People, nowadays, think that in order for a man to become a sinner he must get drunk, gamble, rob a bank, have a fight or commit some awful crime; but I declare unto you, reader, for one to commit the smallest known sin makes him as much a sinner in the sight of God as is the greatest drunkard or foulest harlot in the world. The Word says, “Sin is the transgression of the law”

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(John 3:4). It does not say how much sin, whether an ounce or a ton, but sin. It also says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil," that is, is a child of the devil. No matter how thoroughly saved a person may be, the very moment he wilfully transgresses the law of God, even in the smallest point, he becomes as much a sinner in the sight of God as a horse thief (1 John 3:8). Let us next notice the results of that small sin.

1. It brought immediate condemnation and severed their connection with God. It instantly filled them with guilt, remorse and darkness, just as does the smallest act of disobedience to-day. We admit that people, after transgressing God's law, go right on and pretend to be saved and blest, but if they would acknowledge the clear, clean, judgment-day truth, they would say that their connection with God was severed and their hearts filled with darkness, guilt and condemnation.

2. It not only filled Adam and Eve with guilt and condemnation, but stripped them of their robe of purity, innocence and the image of God, and filled their hearts with anger, pride, jealousy, envy, self-love, malice, lust, deceit and every evil trait found in the heart of the devil.

3. This small act of disobedience did not simply stop at ruining man, but wrecked fair earth, gave birth to every disease, forced every tear, draped every widow in mourning, begot every dying groan and dug every grave in the land.

Among the many disastrous things which this

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small act of disobedience did for them we will mention but one more which, to us, seems among the worst of all. *It immediately perverted their judgment* and caused them to believe that they could cover up sin and deceive the all-wise God. Notice how the record reads: "Adam and his wife hid themselves [from who, the Omnipresent God?] from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:8). We can readily see to what extent sin had perverted their judgment, for David, who had far less wisdom than Adam, testified many years later, as follows: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Psa. 139:7-10).

Let us next notice briefly a few of the fig-leaf excuses which some of the modern Adams and Eves are trying to hide behind. The first one that comes to mind is perverted Scripture. Nowadays, when we tell the people about living without sin and being sanctified wholly, they begin immediately to quote the following: "Man is as liable to sin as the sparks fly upward." There is no such passage of Scripture in the Bible. However, in Job 5:7 we read the following statement: "Yet man is born unto TROUBLE, as the sparks fly upward." The word sin is not in the text. The next fig-leaf excuse is as follows:

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"There is none good; no one can live holy in this life; we get it at death." However, it is quite evident that such people are not at all familiar with the Word of God, for we read in Luke 1:73-75, "The oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Tit. 2:11, 12).

"Our minister doesn't believe in holiness," is one of the popular excuses of modern times. Those who use this as an excuse for not seeking the blessing of holiness, seem to have overlooked the following passages of Scripture: "Let no man deceive you by any means" (2 Thess. 2:3). "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:9). "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

"Once in Christ, never out" is the next modern-day fig-leaf which thousands of carnal-minded professors of religion are endeavoring to hide behind. But the good old book says: "When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning,

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he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered" (Ezek. 3: 20). "If a man abide [stay] not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15: 6).

"I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 5, 6). "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Pet. 3: 17).

This surely looks as if there is a possibility of one's getting out of Christ, if they fail to watch and pray.

XXXVII

CAIN AND ABEL

“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect” (Gen. 4:3-5).

In this narration we have a beautiful description of genuine and spurious religion. Let us more narrowly observe these characters and see how perfectly they resemble the two grades of modern piety. We will first notice some ways in which Cain’s religion resembles the spurious religion of modern times.

1. Cain’s offering was void of *blood* which represented the coming Redeemer, the Lamb of God, who was to take away the sin of the world. Paul said, “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). We are sorry to say, however, that Cain is not without posterity, for there are multitudes throughout the land to-day who still deny their need of the atoning blood of Christ.

2. A second defect which we have discovered in the religion of Cain is as follows: It did not cause him to renounce *all sin*. It is true he professed to be saved, attended worship and also took an active part in all of the services, yet notwithstanding that fact,

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he, at the same time, cherished hatred and murder in his heart. The Word says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15). To-day, in the churches, are hundreds that sing, pray, testify and do religious work, who are not on speaking terms with a fellow worker right in the same church.

3. A third way in which Cain's religion was faulty is seen in the fact that it kept him and caused him to be religious only while at the place of worship, but not while at home and around the farm. He was a saint at church and a devil at home. He spoke as gently as a lamb to the folks at church, and growled like a lion at home. Reader, are you one of these church angels and home demons?

4. Still another noticeable feature of Cain's religion was this: To some extent, it regulated his conduct, but did not change his heart. He was trying to be good and appear religious with the same old unregenerated heart. He was trying to live religion without being born again. He was trying to get his conduct regulated without getting his heart regenerated. He was like the man who tried to get his clock repaired by taking the hands to the silver-smith.

5. The next defect seen in Cain's religion, which strikingly reminds us of the spurious religion of modern times, is, there was that about it which caused its possessor to oppose, hate and persecute real godly people. It is useless for us to inform the

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reader of the fact, that this is the same spirit which has persecuted, ridiculed, slandered and slain the people of God in every age of the world. And the worst of all is, it wears a mask of religion to succeed in accomplishing its deadly work.

Let us next take a hurried glance at the piety of Abel and see how in every detail it harmonizes with apostolic religion.

1. He brought an *acceptable offering* unto God. That is, he was careful to leave out everything which he was sure had not the divine approval. Both Cain and Abel undoubtedly must have had some previous knowledge of what Jehovah required as an offering. Abel's conduct here harmonizes perfectly with the following statement made by St. Paul: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, *acceptable* unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). This kind of an offering always obtains the divine approval.

2. He did it with a humble and contrite spirit; for we are told in the Scripture that God does not accept any other. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Psa. 51:17). "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57:15).

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3. Abel's offering consisted of *the best he had*. It was not simply something good and nice, but also the "firstling;" that is, the best. The flight of time has by no means changed the divine mind. He still requires the best or none at all. He will not accept lame, blemished, moon-eyed, half-hearted service, but demands the best.

4. Still another commendable feature in Abel's conduct worthy of notice is, *he offered it with faith*. The Word says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11:4). This is not said of Cain. Martin Luther discovered long ago that doing penance would not save a soul from hell, but exercising faith in Jesus Christ would.

5. The next striking resemblance between the piety of Abel and apostolic piety is, they both received a clear, definite witness from God that the work was done. God did not leave them to "guess" and "reckon so" about the matter, but made it clear and unmistakable. Notice what the Word says, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which *he obtained witness* that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts" (Heb. 11:4). "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto

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them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:1-4).

XXXVIII

CAIN'S TROUBLE LOCATED

"Sin lieth at the door" (Gen. 4:7).

Here we have a man greatly displeased with God, because He failed to bless him to the extent that He was blessing his brother. However, God quickly remedied the complaint by telling him why He could not bless him. If God should pour His spirit upon a man while living in sin, it would contradict His Word besides encourage that person to continue in a life of sin. Therefore, men everywhere are commanded to repent before they can receive the blessing of God. This grievous complaint, however, did not end with Cain, but is still being propagated by hundreds of professing Christians to-day. But this is why God does not give them the same degree of joy and peace that He does others. Reader, this may be your complaint of long standing, especially when you attend the love-feast and testimony meetings where the children of God are full of joy and praise. No doubt, quite often you have censured God, and accused Him of using partiality. Yet, in the meantime, if you had listened attentively, you would have heard, no doubt, the gentle voice of the Spirit saying, "Sin lieth at the door."

It is to be borne in mind that all sin and disobedience separates the soul from God. Just as a

CAIN'S TROUBLE LOCATED

small obstruction will wreck a railroad train, a small leak sink a vessel and a small snake-bite destroy life, so will the smallest sin bring spiritual death and separate the soul from God.

Reader, in the following list of small sins may be found the one which is lying at your door, and separating your soul from God.

1. A secret spirit of reserve and holding back from God. A tendency to hold on to yourself and not to let God have the full right of way. An unwillingness to shout, scream, run or leap when moved by the Spirit.

2. Yielding at heart to criticism and fault-finding. A disposition to turn your eyes and fix your gaze too constantly upon the faults of others instead of having that degree of charity which "covereth a multitude of sins," which "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth" (1 Cor. 13:6-8).

3. Compromising in a mild form, associating and mixing with cooled-off religious and holiness people. Conforming to the world in a mild way. On the fence in doctrine, half and half. One day with the Tongues, and the next with the orthodox holiness people. In other words, a religious chameleon, which changes to suit its environments.

4. The thing that is locking up heaven and turning your soul into a barren desert may be a stiff, unyielding spirit, one that is slow to acknowledge

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faults and ask forgiveness. Some people would rather take a whipping than humble themselves and ask a fellow creature's pardon.

5. Yielding to scolding and harsh words may also be the grievous sin which is lying at your door. On the other hand, it may be yielding to pride in little things, or gradually backing up against light.

Reader, are the words of the text true in your case? Is it true that sin lieth at your door?

XXXIX

NOAH AND THE FLOOD

"And all flesh died" (Gen. 7:21).

We are told by the apostle Paul that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). Therefore we feel perfectly free to give the above narration a spiritual application.

The statement, "all flesh died," strikingly reminds us of what has to take place before souls get out into the deep with God. For convenience, it would do no violence to the text to make it read as follows: "*And all self died.*" There are but few nowadays who wholly die out to self, and venture into the deep with God. There are many fine lines belonging to the self-life which are as great a hindrance to purity and power as the larger lines of self. If to-day, God would open our spiritual eyes to see men's real spiritual condition, we would be surprised at the number of people professing holiness who are not dead to the carnal self-life. Let us take a hurried glance at just a few of the fine lines of the self-life.

1. A feeling which does not cheerfully submit

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to the will and dictations of another. A feeling lurking within which does not feel perfectly calm and sweet when bossed or ordered around. Kempis says, "Nature is loath to die, reluctant to be kept down or overcome, or to be under, and objects to being in a state of subjection."

2. A disposition which makes its possessor restless, talkative and argumentative when under trial, one which does not calmly and silently endure all things. "There is scarcely anything which you stand so much in need of in dying to yourself, as seeing and suffering the things which are contrary to your own will."

3. Still another fine line of self which has to be drowned out, before the soul can get into the deep with God, is a tendency to make sense faith's foundation, rather than the eternal God. There are so many religious people who have smooth sailing only while they can see land, that is, while they realize some marked manifestation of the presence of God. But should a storm rise and dark clouds fill their spiritual sky, and the angry thunder of hell begin to growl, they at once become weak as water and are ready to call retreat.

4. A person who loves to be petted, humored and made over, and who can also easily be made to feel slighted, neglected, lonesome and imposed upon, notwithstanding his pious conduct, good testimonies, long prayers and eloquent sermons, is not thoroughly dead to self.

5. It is also a sure indication of the self-life

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lurking within when one is easily embarrassed, shrinks from shame, criticism and reproach, and also when one feels unhappy in the society of the plain and humble pilgrims.

6. The person who enjoys receiving gifts and presents more than he does giving them, has still a streak of self running through his spiritual life. "Self does everything for gain, and for her own convenience; can do nothing unless she is paid for it, but hopes to get either an equivalent or an advantage in exchange for every kindness, or else praise or favor; and she desires that her deeds, gifts and words should be highly esteemed." The good old book says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

The following verse strikingly reminds us of a soul who has really died to self and gotten into the deep with God: "And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered" (Gen. 7:18, 19).

The first fact here, which is similar to a soul getting into the deep with God, is, Noah lost sight of all created things. Truly, he was in the world but not of it. So it is with those who would become deeply spiritual. They must lose sight of wealth, honor, fame, reputation, fashion, custom, nationalities, parties and creeds, and see Jesus only.

Second. Noah and the ark floated unobstructed

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upon the bosom of the waters. There was not an obstacle in all the world to hinder his onward course. So it is when a person cuts loose from every created thing, and dies out to the opinion of every one, there is nothing in all creation that can hinder him from worshipping God in the beauty of holiness and traveling upward to the city of gold.

A third noticeable fact seen in this narration, which greatly resembles the conduct of the deeply spiritual person, is, Noah did not have a single stake set as to *when, where* and *how*. He left matters absolutely in the hands of the great God who hath said, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather in barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Matt. 6: 25-30). We are not to understand by this that we are not to work and earn a living (2 Thess. 3: 10). What the Son of God means here is, that we be free from anxious

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care, uneasiness, carnal fear, and lack of faith and confidence in the living God.

Finally, Noah reached a place where, in his own estimation, there was *but one family* upon earth.

Reader, have you gotten beyond the bounds of "*isms*," "*ites*," *parties* and *creeds* and into the place which Christ mentioned in His prayer, when He prayed as follows: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; *that they all may be one*; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be *one in us* that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me" (John 17:20, 21).

XL

ABRAHAM AND LOT

"And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left" (Gen. 13:7-9).

If we modernize the words of the eighth verse, they would read as follows: "Let there be no ill feeling existing between me and thee, for we are Christians."

Stirring up strife among the people of God is one of Satan's most successful ways of retarding the good work and causing souls to backslide. "Religious contention is the devil's harvest." "When two discourse, if the one's anger rise, the man who lets the contest fall is wise." The question may arise here, what is strife? Noah Webster gives it the following definition: "Exertion or contention for superiority; contention in anger or enmity; contest; struggling for victory; quarrel or war; opposition; contrariety; agitation produced by different qualities."

It may be well, right here, to mention a few of

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the leading things which usually breed strife in the Church of God. They are as follows: A desire for favoritism, jealousy, self-will, office-seeking and the desire for leadership, etc.

Strife is contagious and spreads like wild-fire. It would require but a short time for it to consume the most spiritual church upon earth. In the following lines will be seen some of the manifestations of strife: A reflecting, insinuating, missile-throwing spirit, in the form of prayer and testimony; a discord-sowing, evil-speaking, tattling spirit; a knavish, undermining, ill-working spirit; one which smiles in your face and daggers you in the back; one which stands up for you in the light, but fights you in the dark, and in secret.

“Most guilty, villainous, dishonest man!
Wolf in the clothing of the pious lamb!
Dark traitor in Messiah’s holy camp!
Leper in saintly garb! assassin masked
In virtue’s robe! vile hypocrite accursed.”

In the following lines will be found the only known remedy for strife. 1. Unbosom it by making an honest confession, one which covers all the ground and, if possible, reaches as far as the effects of strife have gone. 2. Pray and get back on good terms with God. 3. Humbly ask the forgiveness of those persons who have been affected in the least degree by this strife. 4. Remove or remedy every thing which may have a tendency to breed strife in the future. 5. Forever refrain from carrying, bringing or receiving evil reports.

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Finally, after you have tried every known remedy to staunch the stream of strife, and all have failed, the last and only remaining thing to be done is to separate. Abram said to Lot, "Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left" (Gen. 13:9).

XLI

LOT'S SODOMWARD COURSE

"Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Gen. 13:12).

If we were allowed to twentieth-centurize the above text, it would read after this order: "*Abram continued in the grace of God, but Lot drifted worldward and hellward.*" Lot and his conduct at this point strikingly remind us of the sinner and his hellward course. It does not appear that Lot reached Sodom in one day, but made several short stops on the way. However, all the while his face was set Sodomward. So it is with the unsaved to-day; every year, month, week, day, hour, moment and second brings them that much nearer a lake of fire and brimstone. It is true, they may treat the matter lightly and scoff at the idea of getting saved, yet as surely as the sun rises in the East and sets in the West, they are hourly moving toward the flames.

Notice some circumstances connected with this Sodomward course which are quite similar to those of the unsaved.

1. There were two ways pointed out to him one of which he was to make his choice. In verse nine Abraham said, "If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." This is exactly

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what God does to the sinner. "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil" (Deut. 30:15). "Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death" (Jer. 21:8). "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve" (Josh. 24:15).

2. He chose that which would render him the greatest portion of this world's goods. In other words, he chose for time rather than for eternity. This appears to be the decision of a rich man who lived in Jesus' time. Listen to the brief story. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:16-20).

Some years ago a dying wealthy man suddenly awoke to the fact that he had made the same mistake. "He had spent his life amassing a fortune of \$75,000, but had never given any special attention to his soul's salvation. When he came to die his wealth was no satisfaction to him; on the contrary, it cost him great anguish to fully realize that he had spent his life in amassing wealth to the neglect of his soul. In this trying condition, he called in his brother-in-

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law to pray for him, who said that the dying man called so loudly for mercy that he, the brother-in-law, could scarcely hear himself pray or fix his thoughts on anything. After the prayer was over, the wealthy man took the hand of his brother-in-law in both of his, and said as he shook it, "Good-by, John. Pray for me. I shall never see you again." And he never did. A little later his son came into his room and said, "Father, what arrangements, if any, do you wish to make in regard to the property?" He said, "I have given all my life to gain property; I can not take a dollar with me. The law and the family will have to take care of that; I want to take care of my soul. Property avails nothing; I want mercy." And so he died, calling upon God for mercy; but he left no evidence that he found it.

3. His next step Sodomward was, he got away from religious influence. How many precious young people there are in the cities to-day in the depths of sin and iniquity, who were brought up in the home to pray and fear God; but in coming to the city they have drifted from home training, mother's prayers and the instructions of a godly father, and are now nearing the border-land of infidelity.

You've drifted from mother's training dear,
When she prayed and wept 'till heav'n seemed near,
As up she looked, and with accents mild,
Said, "Lord, have mercy on my child."

XLII

ELIJAH'S SMALL CLOUD

"And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel" (1 Kings 18:41-46).

How mindful God was of His children when He inspired the fathers to write the blessed Bible. For in it, He has placed a stimulant for every phase of the Christian life. It abounds with object lessons, pen pictures and examples, as well as precepts and promises, all of which are great helps to holy living.

Here, in this brief narration, we are taught several beautiful lessons, which will prove quite a stimulant to faith, and also an excellent fertilizer for the prayer life.

Let us briefly and without prejudice scan this

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narrative, and at the same time pick out the spiritual nuggets of gold.

1. In verse forty-two, it says, "Ahab went up to *eat and to drink*. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel to *pray*." What a contrast! This is a life-sized picture of the carnal-minded, gluttonous, pleasure-loving church member on the one hand, and the spiritual-minded child of God on the other. We have always found it far more profitable to steal away to secret prayer than to attend birthday parties, Christmas dinners, and ice cream suppers. Oh, how sad it is that all of the pleasure-loving, gormandizing Ahabs did not die in the days of Elijah; if so, the present church would not be constantly annoyed and polluted by such degrading influences as fairs, entertainments, socials, suppers and picnics.

2. The second lesson brought to us through Elijah's cloud experience, is this: When we are praying for a special blessing or favor from God, we are not to relax our hold until we obtain an inward witness that our prayer is heard and our petition granted. This is what Elijah did. It is true, the witness may not always be clear and brilliant, yet it will be sufficiently clear for faith to get a foothold and to remain as immovable as a rock. The cloud appeared to be only the size of a man's hand to Elijah's servant (*viz.*, the natural man), but the keen-eyed man of faith saw in it the whole heavens draped in blackness, also heard the muttering thunder and rapacious wind and, besides, saw torrents of rain falling from heaven. He did not wait until

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he was drenched with water before he believed God, but believed on first sight. His faith was so buoyant, his expectation so electrified, his *way, will* and *choice* in such harmony with the will of God, and his spiritual ear so acute, that he readily recognized the first, faint glimmer of God. He was not so dull and full of unbelief that he had to wait for a house to fall upon him before he could believe. Reader, how are you on this line?

3. We are also taught through Elijah's cloud experience that when we succeed in praying through and obtain the witness that our petition is granted, we do not need to pray for that special thing any more, but *trust* and *wait*. Elijah did not continue to pray for rain after the servant told him of the cloud arising, but began to seek shelter right away, i. e., prepared for the answer.

4. Through this lesson we also discover the reason why people no longer have the spirit of prayer for their loved ones, and cease to have anxious concern after they have succeeded in praying through and have obtained the witness that God is going to save them. Many honest Christian parents have condemned themselves, and doubted the genuineness of their experience because of the absence of this soul burden for their loved ones. It is too bad, however, that they have never awakened to the fact that the blessed Holy Spirit never makes intercession through His children unnecessarily, neither does He inspire them to pray for things which have already been granted.

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5. Again, the fact that the cloud *rose in the distance* shows us very clearly, when spiritually applied, that after we have prayed through and received the evidence that God will surely bring it to pass, even then He may, in His wise providence, see best to defer its fulfilment for years. Abraham prayed through for a certain thing and died before it came to pass; however, God brought it to pass at the right time and place. Reader, if you have prayed through and obtained the evidence from God that He will save your loved ones, or grant that long standing petition, do not worry or grow uneasy, but leave it all to Him. He will surely bring it to pass in His own time, which may be after you have been in heaven for years. Therefore, look up, dear one, and be encouraged; God has not forgotten your tear-stained, midnight petition, but still has it on file.

6. The next thought suggested by the small cloud is found in the words, "There ariseth a little cloud out of the sea" (1 Kings 18:44). In spiritual mathematics the sea and ocean always represent an inexhaustible supply. The thought suggested is this: even though the beginning be small, there is a boundless supply in reserve upon which we may daily draw. Many clean, honest souls have become discouraged and doubted away a real divinely-wrought work in their souls, for the simple reason that it was not as brilliant as the experience of some one else, or because they did not receive it in every detail like this or that person. We must ever keep the following thought in mind: The essential of sal-

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vation is not noise, bluster, forwardness or demonstration, but a work wrought in the heart by the blessed Holy Ghost. We once attended a meeting where an earnest sister received the blessing of holiness on the quiet order. She received a definite witness that the work was done, but did not make any great outward demonstration. Many of the workers doubted her and wanted her to go back to the altar, but there happened to be present an old father in the gospel, who quickly took in the situation, and exhorted her to hold fast to what God had done, and not to return to the altar or doubt away her blessing. She took Him at His word, and to-day she is one of the most out and out holiness women in the country. O dear ones, let us not despise the day of small things! Many a young preacher on starting out has become discouraged over the fact that he did not possess the freedom of thought, the command of language, the insight into the Scriptures, and the variety of subjects that some father in the gospel did. Remember, dear ones, though your present attainments be small, there is an inexhaustible ocean of grace and divine knowledge from which you may daily draw. Therefore, take heart and do not allow Satan to frighten you by saying, you will finally run out of pulpit matter and have nothing new to preach. You will find the more you pray and study God's Word, the more you will have to preach about.

7. A final thought suggested by the lesson is found in verse forty-six, where the prophet was so

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moved upon by the Spirit of the Lord that he girded up his loins and outran the spirited steeds of Ahab all the way to the gates of Jezreel. The prophet's conduct here suggests the following thought: whenever we pray through for others, God gives us a special uplift in our own souls, and sets us in a new place. Elijah had won a twofold victory. He had succeeded in praying clear by the prejudice and hostility of proud King Ahab, and also drilled through a long-standing drought of three years and six months, and found water. There is no marvel that he ran nearly twenty miles. There is no surer way of getting blest than giving out to others. No matter how weak, timid or backward we are, if we will begin to testify and exhort others, we will soon become like giants filled with new wine. When Job began to pray for his friends, God gave him twice as much wealth as he previously had.

Reader, if you want God to give you the double-portion blessing, you must begin to *dig out*, *move out*, and *give out*, and in so doing, you will find that the waters of grace will rise and become waters to swim in, even a river that can not be passed over.

XLIII

THE GLORY IS DEPARTED

"The glory is departed from Israel" (1 Sam. 4:22).

This heart-rending cry fell from the lips of the dying wife of Phinehas, the son of Eli, on the day that Israel fled before the Philistines.

Now, reader, let us modernize this lesson and see if it does not in every way harmonize with the present state of things.

We will notice what the "glory" was to Israel. It meant the powerful presence of Jehovah in their midst, sweeping their enemies before them, and giving them victory on every side. The present church is now God's spiritual Israel, and He, on the day of Pentecost, gave it the highest type of "glory," viz., the great outpouring of the Holy Ghost and fire, which resulted in sinners being converted, believers sanctified, the sick healed and the work of God spread like a forest fire. Now, we must confess that the church as a whole has lost this mighty power with God, so the thing to be done is to find the causes and speedily remedy them. You will notice in reading this fourth chapter of First Samuel that there were three things that caused this dying woman to make this awful statement. They were as follows: 1. Israel is fled before the Philistines. 2. The priests are slain. 3. The ark of God is taken.

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Now, if you will carefully look about you, you will find the same state of affairs existing to-day. Let us notice these three conditions in order to loosely explain them.

First. "Israel is fled before the Philistines." "Israel" here stands for the laity of the church. The "Philistines" stand for the world and the enemies of religion. How true it is that they have fled before their enemies! Just see how fashion, love of pleasure, gluttony, lust and covetousness have sapped away all of the spiritual life from the modern professors of religion. They are as estranged to real godliness as is a wild ass on the mountain. Their chief desire is to dress nicely, be admired and have a good time. Where their forefathers used to attend church to sing, pray, shout and praise God, they go nowadays only to display their nice clothing and to be in good society. Oh, lamentable state of affairs!

The second complaint was "the priests are slain" (viz., the preachers). The only difference between Israel's priests and our preachers is, Israel's priests were slain by the Philistines and ours are slain by the love of money, the love of authority, the love of praise, the love of women, the love of worldly wisdom, the love of popularity, personal ambition and politics. Oh, for a spiritual mother to sound the note of warning, "The glory is departed!"

The third complaint, which snapped her heart strings completely, was "the ark of God is taken." Truly, the old-time unction that used to be on the

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ministers and their congregations, that mightily convicted sinners and piled them around the altar like cord wood, that sanctified believers by the scores, that healed the sick and shook the country for miles, is gone, and in its stead the pipe-organ, the operatic choir and the "D.D." (dumb dog) preacher have been adopted. O God, wake us up before we awake in hell!

XLIV

THE WILD VINE

"And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot" (2 Kings 4:38-40).

Here we have one of the truest pictures that is to be found in the Bible of how God's children get into error. We are aware of the fact that these are awful days, and error and fanaticism are surrounding us on every side; therefore "to be forewarned is to be forearmed."

As we proceed to paraphrase this narration we wish the reader to take special notice of how perfectly it resembles some of the ways by which people get into error nowadays. If we spiritualize the meaning of this "pot" or "feed-station," it would mean the church, the place where the sons and daughters of God are fed. The spiritual definition of this "*wild vine*" is "*error*."

Let us observe this story more narrowly, and see what we can find of interest.

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1. The first fact that comes to the surface, which is worthy of our attention, is this: it was a good, pious, godly man who gathered this poison vine (2 Kings 4:39). This evidences the fact that it is possible for even a good man to get switched off into error, if he fails to watch and pray. A good, religious man, who has the confidence of multitudes, if he should get into error, is far more dangerous than fifty less spiritual men. Nothing seems to please Satan better than to get an eminently godly man into error, for in doing so hundreds of honest, well-meaning people will be dragged into the same pit.

2. The next startling fact seen in verse thirty-nine is this: *The man went out where the wild vine grew.* Perhaps he was like many presumptuous, hard-headed Christians of to-day, who say they are not afraid to attend the meetings held by the Christian Scientists, the Tongues, the Mormons, the Russellites, the Adventists and the Catholics, as they want to know what is going on; however, it often results in turning them from the royal way.

3. His intentions were good. He went in search of something good, but got hold of the wrong thing. Many an honest soul, with good intentions, has gone into meetings, which were being conducted by persons in error, in search of soul food, but instead got hold of a wild vine. They remind us of a lad who lived in the state of Mississippi, and who went out one evening to get his mother a rabbit, but instead brought home a live rattlesnake. In his search, however, he

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had found a rabbit all right, but on giving it a hot chase, it ran into a hollow log. The lad in his earnest pursuit rushed up to the log, dropped upon his knees and proceeded to pull the rabbit from its hiding place. Just then he felt something pulling and trying to free itself from under his knees, and, on looking down, awoke to the fact that his knees were pinning down a large rattlesnake in its coil. As providence seemed to arrange it, he had enough presence of mind to grip it tightly around the neck, near the head, with one hand, and with the other to grip it down near the center of its body. In this position he carried it home, running every step of the way, and screaming at the top of his voice. He, like the wild vine man, had gone out in search of food, but instead was returning with rank poison.

4. The next thing about the wild vine man which greatly resembles those who get into error is seen in the fact that he not only brought it home and was eating freely of it himself, but was also trying to feed it to his brethren and fellow workers. Frequently, when a good brother or sister goes out to some strange meeting and imbibes a lot of false doctrine and strange ideas, he or she will either start up a prayer meeting in his or her own home and thus try to feed it to others, or else go from house to house distributing the poisonous weed.

5. The next fact about him, which is quite suggestive as well as full of thought, is as follows: In order to succeed in administering the wild vine to his brethren and colaborers, he had to carefully mix

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it in with the pottage, namely, the wholesome food. This same method has been adopted to-day by almost every propagator of error. They always mix in enough truth to conceal and cover up the false. They are like the man who remarked that he could find a passage in the Bible which said, "There is no God." On being requested to do so, he turned to the Fourteenth Psalm and with his thumb proceeded to cover up the first line. He was then told to remove his thumb, and there he would find his name. The part which he covered with his thumb read as follows: "The fool hath said in his heart." The part left exposed were these words, "There is no God."

6. A final thought suggested by the lesson which is brimful of meaning, is how they obtained deliverance. Deliverance did not come until they cried out against it, "There is death in the pot." "We have here a deadly mixture." They did not obtain deliverance by simply renouncing it. There are many to-day who have gone off after a delusion and gotten into error, who, on discovering the fact, quietly renounced it and slipped back into the holiness movement. But that is, by no means, God's way. When we discover a doctrine or movement to be wrong, God wants us to lift up our voices and cry out against it, and thus prevent other honest souls from falling into the same pit.

XLV

THE PUNCTUALITY OF GOD

“And they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver” (Gen. 37:28).

The thought suggested to our mind through this little incident is the punctuality of God, or, in other words, *God in the nick of time*. It is astonishing what an awful fight Satan puts up to discourage God’s people and to break down their faith, when in close and trying circumstances. One of the most difficult lessons, however, for them to learn and keep in mind, is the *station* and *circumstances* under which God, in bygone days, met His people, brought deliverance and answered their prayers. The question, no doubt, that arises in the mind of the reader is, “Where is this mysterious clime?” We answer, *at man’s extremity*.

Many years ago our father related to his children a story which strikingly reminds us of how God comes at the critical moment. The story was as follows: Once upon a time there lived on the margin of a dense forest in a small log cabin, with a large dirt chimney, a man, his wife and a small child. One day the man took his gun and went into the forest in search of game. After he had been gone for some time, a large panther came out of the forest and attempted to force open the door that he

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might destroy the woman and child, but not succeeding, he climbed upon the roof and tried to enter the house through the chimney. The poor woman, appalled with fear, remembered that panthers could not endure the scent of burnt feathers. So she hastily removed the feather mattress from the bed and began applying feathers to the flames, a handful at a time, and thus kept the panther at bay on the roof of the house. No doubt, all the while she was lifting her heart to God in earnest prayer. Finally, after an hour or more had passed away, she took from the mattress the last handful of feathers and committed them to the flames. As the last bit of smoke was ascending the chimney and the odor rapidly dying away, she heard the discharge of her husband's gun and the panther's dead body tumbling from the roof of the cabin. This is just the way God works. He always puts in His appearance at the last hour, yet always on time.

Now for our special encouragement let us trace this thought throughout the Bible and see how securely it holds, for God has verified it with a long line of events running from creation's dawn down to the present day.

1. On the last night before Jacob was to face his brother Esau, who was coming to meet him with four hundred men, to take vengeance upon him for stealing his birthright. The record reads as follows: "And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took

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them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day * * * And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Gen. 32:22-28).

2. When Hagar was homeless and destitute, and the water spent in the bottle, and she had cast her child away to die. In that critical hour the record reads, "And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand: for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink" (Gen. 21:17-19).

3. When the mother of Moses could keep him concealed no longer and was compelled to dispose of him. Listen how the records read. "And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off [but God did not], to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came

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down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side: and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him" (Exod. 2:3-6).

4. Still another manifestation of God at the last hour, is when the widow of Zarephath went out to gather sticks to cook her last meal before yielding up life to the rapacious wolf of starvation. Just then God appeared on the scene through His servant Elijah. Listen to the gentle words of comfort which fell like dewdrops from the precious lips of the man of God, upon the wave-tossed, storm-ridden soul of the pious widow. "Fear not * * * for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth" (1 Kings 17:13, 14).

5. When at Nebuchadnezzar's command the furnace was as much like hell as it could be made and the "martyrs, with their hands bound behind them, were pushed up the slope, side by side, by the soldiers walking behind them, and using them as a shield against the heat. When the door was reached, the Ethiopians swung it open with iron hooks, and at the same instant, the soldiers gave the condemned men a violent push. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell down 'into the midst of the fire,' and the soldiers who pushed them in fell back dead, slain by the hot breath of the furnace. The fright-

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ened slaves fled as from the mouth of hell, chased by the angry flames, which leaped from the open door." Did God forget His servants? Was He on time? Let the king who had them thrown in answer our question. "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Dan. 3:24, 25).

Time would fail to tell how God met Daniel in the lion's den, Peter the last night in jail, Paul and Silas in jail, and John banished on the isle of Patmos.

Let us carefully observe John's testimony at this point and see if it sounds as if God had deserted him, or failed to be on time to meet him, on that solitary island. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia. * * * And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and

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His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1: 10-18).

Reader, if you have a long-standing petition up at the throne, or have left a serious matter in the hands of God to look after, do not worry or fret; He will not forget to attend to it, but will be there *on the minute*. Again, it may be that Satan often annoys you with the thought that God will desert you in the trying ordeal of death, and fail to meet you at the river. But fear not, He is sure to be there. When Stephen was passing through Jordan's surging tide he shouted, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." "I see angels clapping their hands around the great white throne," cried Eva Greening. "He is come! My Beloved is mine and I am His forever," said Thomas Walsh. Oh, do not doubt Him, reader; He is always on time!

When my stay on earth is ended,
And life's fading like a dream,

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I am sure my Lord will meet me,
Down at Jordan's icy stream.

When my long-imprisoned spirit
From its mortal house is freed,
And I'm facing unknown regions,
Christ will be my guide to lead.

XLVI

THE HALF HAS NOT BEEN TOLD

“And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half * * * was not told me” (2 Chron. 9:3-6).

Solomon, in the days of his glory, was a fitting resemblance of the Lord Jesus Christ and His everlasting kingdom. The queen of Sheba, when spiritually applied, beautifully typifies the church when she shall arrive at home and behold the King in His beauty, and the glory of His kingdom.

In divine revelation God the Father seems to have kept Himself in the background, and turned the eyes of all beings in heaven and on earth upon His Son.

Abraham’s visitor in the plains of Mamre was Jesus Christ (Gen. 18:1; John 8:58). The angel of the covenant who led the children of Israel through the wilderness with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, was this same Jesus. The Captain of the Lord’s host, who appeared to Joshua

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near Jericho, was the same Jesus who came to earth many centuries later to seek and to save that which was lost. It was this same Jesus whom the prophet Isaiah saw in a vision, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple (Isa. 6:1).

The prophet Daniel testified in the following words of seeing this very same Jesus: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire" (Dan. 7:9). Paul gave Timothy the following exhortation regarding this Jesus: "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in His times He shall shew, who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Tim. 6:14-16). The apostle John took up the same strain in the following language: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." The four beasts and four and twenty elders in heaven took up the strain also with flaming tongues. "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, hav-

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ing seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain. * * * And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5: 6-13).

Let us briefly notice some of the many discoveries that will some day cause millions of flaming tongues in heaven to exclaim with wonder and amazement, "The half was not told!"

1. At the end of our long, weary, wave-tossed voyage we pass through the gates of pearl and standing upon the pavement of transparent gold,

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we gaze upon that world of fadeless day. At this point we obtain a perfect knowledge of the height, depth, breadth and length of redeeming love—how the Savior left His Father, the association of angels and all the bliss of heaven and went to earth to live a life of poverty and shame. How He rushed beneath the flaming sword and took the sinner's place, while on His immaculate form justice reeked all his rage. Oh, what love divine! What infinite mercy that could freely forgive the deepest dyed rebel, wash him white and make him equal with Deity! Yes, when we get a glimpse of redeeming love from heaven's point of view and see how it blended heaven and earth together, making God, angels and men one family, we will exclaim with astonishment and wonder, "The half was not told!"

2. When with the insight heaven gives we fully realize Christ's victory over Satan and the powers of darkness, we will again make heaven ring with the words of the queen of Sheba. Yes, when we look through the galleries of heaven among the imagery of wonders past and see how the Savior met Satan in open conflict on the plains of heaven, and with "linked thunderbolts, barbed arrows and careering fires, drove him out from God and bliss into the wasteful deep, while eternal wrath pursued him to the bottomless pit;" and when from that crystal-line world we realize how on Calvary's rugged brow the Savior, in human weakness, grappled with Satan and all the powers of hell for six long hours and defeated them, while rocks rended, earth quaked

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and heaven veiled its face; yes, when we more fully realize how His emancipated spirit threw open the gates of death and swept down its dark archway, pursuing Satan and his rebel host into that world of penal fires, and how He imprisoned them there, and brought away the keys of hell and death, we will exclaim with flaming tongues, "The half has not been told!"

3. When we behold His immaculate purity in full bloom and in its native clime beneath the ever-beaming rays of unclouded holiness, we will quickly confess that His standard of purity in deed, word and thought, for men on earth, was not at all too high, for the half was never told.

4. When beneath the bowers of bliss we awake to the full knowledge of the efficacy of the blood of Christ through seeing millions of once-polluted sinners clothed in white linen and waving branches of palms, we will exclaim with flaming tongues, "There was no excuse for sin on earth; the half of the power of the blood has not been told."

5. When we awake from the slumber of ignorance and obtain a clearer conception of the power of God, how He spoke worlds into existence, weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in balances, how He hung out the planets and paved the "milky way" with a hundred and seventeen million suns, I say, when we awake to these stupendous facts, we will, no doubt, blush because of our former ignorance and mistrust, and shout with flaming tongues, "The half was not told!"

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6. When from that high view-point we obtain a more perfect knowledge of God's great universe, we will then awake more fully to the greatness of Jesus. We will realize more perfectly how much there was implied in the word *omnipresent*. When we remember that the universe is so vast that if one should shoot forth arrows, east, west, north and south, at the velocity of a hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second, they would fly for ever and never reach side, bottom or shore. And yet our Savior occupies all of this space. What a wonderful Savior!

7. When we shall behold the King of kings, the Proprietor of immortality, unsearchable Jehovah, the all-seeing Invisible One, seated upon His snow-white throne, amid a sea of jasper, in that far-off land, what will it be? Yes, we shall behold His hair, which is like lamb's wool as white as snow, and His face above the brightness of a million suns. Think of His love-lit eyes and musical voice! Think of the ineffable glory that will surround His throne. These stupendous revelations and millions more will again force us to exclaim, "The half was not told!"

Now, for fear that we have become a little excited on just arriving at home and are somewhat over-rating things, let us make a few inquiries from those who have been here many years before we came. There stands pious Abel over on Hallelujah avenue. Let us ask him about things here. "Say, Abel, how about this Jesus and His kingdom and glory?" Abel replies in the following words, "I

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have been tenting on these everlasting hills, roaming these blooming fields that skirt the stream of life, drinking at the amber well of bliss, and listening to the rich and multitudinous harmonies of angel harps every moment for six thousand years, and I declare unto you the half has not been told."

That's pretty good, Brother Abel, but you haven't been here long enough. We will go over here near the great white throne and inquire of the first-born sons of light who serenaded Jehovah while He laid the foundation of the earth, created the sun and moon, and draped the spangling arch with billions of starry lamps. "Say, Gabriel, Michael and Oriel, how about this man Jesus Christ, His glory and the duration of His kingdom? Is there any end to it?" "No, only the end at which you have entered! 'The half has not been told!'"

XLVII

FOXFIRE

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not" (Lev. 10:1).

If we were permitted to give the text a modern interpretation, the latter part of it would read as follows: "*And offered foxfire before the Lord,* which He commanded them not."

As there are lots of imitations to-day in the jewelry and dry goods world, so there are in the religious world. We must ever bear the thought in mind that every one who shouts and pretends to be happy is not saved. John said we were to try the spirits to see whether they be of God or not.

The title, "foxfire," which heads this chapter, derived its name from a soft, jelly-like substance which the sun and wet weather extracts from decaying logs in the forest. At night this peculiar substance sheds forth a dull, pale light. It is called "foxfire" because, at night, it somewhat resembles real fire. The term "foxfire," in the religious world, is used when reference is being made to counterfeit religion. In this chapter we want to describe a few of the special features of "foxfire" which greatly resemble those of counterfeit religion. We may not be able to give the reader a perfect photo; however,

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we shall endeavor to tell him enough about it so that he will be able to recognize it when he sees it.

1. The first amusing feature about "foxfire" is this: it has to stay in darkness to exist. To bring it into the light means to spoil and destroy its luster. We have often wondered how those worldly churches could have such apparent good meetings and how their members could scream, run and shout so high, while at the same time they were walking in forbidden paths, chewing tobacco, drinking beer, desecrating the Sabbath and sinning every day in *word, deed and thought*. But later on, we discovered that the greater part of what they had was foxfire, and would not exist in the light. However, they did not want any gospel light. If they were brought into a good, clean, red-hot gospel meeting where the true light was shining, they would be under as much condemnation as any sinner in town. They could no more shout and rejoice in such a meeting than a man could fly to heaven with a pair of lead wings. They can only shout in their own company, where they have their own standard set up, and the confidence of each other. But a man who is really saved and filled with Holy Ghost fire can shout and rejoice anywhere, whether people believe in him or not.

2. A second interesting fact about foxfire is, it is void of heat, and sends out a chilled, deadening influence. This clearly explains why a good, red-hot meeting takes such a sudden change and drops in temperature after one of these sin-pleading,

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holiness-hating, tobacco-chewing, beer-drinking and lodge-indorsing professors of religion gives in his testimony.

3. Still another noticeable, as well as amusing, feature about foxfire is, it thrives more rapidly in low, marshy places. So does counterfeit religion. Its possessors do not care to join and take their stand with any clean, radical, orthodox church, but like to run loose and associate with those missions where the standard of piety is as shallow as duck tracks. This class of people do not want to be reined up by a church discipline, or have a strict, godly man to watch over their souls, but like to run all over the country, profess everything and live nothing.

4. Again, foxfire is misleading. It is something on the Jack-o-lantern order; at night it leads the confused traveler from the right path into the muck, mire and briary tangles; so does counterfeit religion and holiness. It eases up on self, makes excuses for the old man, and ridicules the cross and the narrow way. One of these religious apes can sow more seeds of compromise, dissatisfaction, lawlessness, drawback and let down among the converts in a single meeting than the pastor and class-leaders can gather up and undo in five months.

5. Finally. It is a sure sign of decay. It never grows on good, sound timber, but on that class which is in decline. Many who once had good experiences have let down, cooled off and taken up with foxfire. They can imitate the real to perfec-

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tion, but are perfectly dead. Their prayers, testimonies, exhortations or sermons, neither burn nor bless any one. There is no more power or heat in what they say than there is in painted sunshine or midnight moonbeams.

Reader, let us pay the price and have the genuine.

XLVIII

THAT OLD SERPENT

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:9).

The Bible parables are very simple, yet they are wonderfully significant. As we read the word "serpent," instantly there comes before our mind's eye, a large, speckled, green-eyed, fork-tongued, hissing serpent, with its head raised in the air, ready to strike, while its body forms a deadly coil.

This title, no doubt, was given to Satan because of his affiliation with the serpent in the garden of Eden. However, let that be as it may, we are all willing to admit that it is a very fitting title for the old deceiver. Whenever we behold the wreck and ruin of sin throughout the land, it would not be speaking amiss to say to those about us, "Behold, the works of the old serpent." It may be well at this point to call the attention of the reader to a few of the many ways in which a serpent greatly resembles Satan, the archfiend of hell.

The serpent is wise, crafty and keeps out of sight. In the fields and forests it is a common thing to see sparrows, rabbits, toads, etc., but it is a rare thing to see a serpent. It is true, we often see signs, indicating the fact that one has passed that way, but we

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seldom ever overtake it. In the state of Pennsylvania, about thirty-five years ago, it is said an unusually large serpent was found in a rock cave. It was so shrewd and subtle that it had avoided being detected for many years. A company of men, however, pursued it on horseback, but it outran them all, killed a child in its way, and escaped into Lake Erie. This strikingly reminds us of how Satan keeps out of sight and in the background. We often hear people make the following remarks: "There is no devil; we never see any signs of him." They fail to realize that through this very method Satan captures more souls than through any other.

The serpent resembles Satan from the standpoint that it is every one's enemy. It has no favorites, but with equal enmity and deadly hate, lives in readiness to make war with each member of the human race. Equally so is it with Satan; from the days of Adam to the present time he has been an enemy to all of woman born. It is true he often makes suggestions to the thoughtless souls, which fact sometimes leads them to think him interested in their welfare, but it is false. He never trifles, but always shoots to kill.

Another striking way in which the serpent resembles Satan is in the fact that it captures all of its victims through an alluring influence. One day a man noticed a sparrow flying first up then down, and then in a circle. In the meantime, it continued to chirp in a pitiful, lamentable way. The man's curiosity urged him to investigate matters in order

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that he might see what the trouble was. On nearing the spot he saw a large serpent with its head lifted two or three feet in the air, and in perpetual motion, while its eyes were steadily fixed upon the sparrow. The sparrow could not get away, but was simply flying up and down, and around and around. The serpent had succeeded in charming it. This is similar to the way Satan allures and captures sinners. Often sinners are asked why they do not refrain from attending the dance halls, the theaters, the smoking clubs, the gambling dens, the billiard halls and the saloons. But their pitiable reply is, "We can not, there is something about those places that commands our presence."

Yet, again, the serpent resembles the old deceiver in the way it slowly but surely twines its body around its victim and finally gets a deadly hold. A hunter, one day on passing through a dense forest in a foreign land, was suddenly startled by the savage growls of a fierce lion, some distance ahead in the jungles. He stepped forward quietly to see if he could get sight of it. The following objects met his gaze: A large serpent, about fifteen or eighteen feet, with its tail twined around a suspending limb of a tree, had swung its body down and coiled it tightly around a lion. The lion was tearing the serpent's head with its claws, and also making many a desperate effort to free himself. But the slimy, coiled monster slowly tightened its hold and crushed the lion to death. This is a life-sized picture of the man whom Satan has slyly, but surely

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bound, with the drink, the tobacco, and the opium habit. It is true the poor victim struggles hard to free himself by signing "the pledge" and taking the "gold and Keeley cure," and also by making many a stern resolution on Christmas and New Year's day, but in spite of all of his efforts, he drops into the grave a hopeless victim of Satan. The only remedy to be found in all the world for such a soul is the salvation of Jesus Christ. The good book says, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Another way in which there is a marked resemblance existing between the serpent and Satan, is that the serpent inflicts an incurable wound upon men's bodies. Satan inflicts a deadly wound upon the souls of men, which can be cured only by the blood of the immaculate Son of God.

A final way in which the serpent resembles Satan is, it devours its victim alive. It is said a serpent will not eat a dead animal of any kind. Some years ago a man discovered a large snake in his yard, with quite a knot in its body, up near the neck. He struck the snake with a club, and out of its mouth leaped a large toad which hurriedly hopped away. The snake had swallowed it alive.

We have all, no doubt, seen that old withered hag, foul harlot, or loathsome drunkard in the alley or gutter, whom Satan, the old serpent, has devoured alive. Almost every person who has seen such sights turns his head in another direction, and quickly walks away.

XLIX

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead" (Luke 10:30).

When spiritually applied, we have here a striking picture of the sinner, Satan, false religion, and the Savior. This *certain man* typifies or stands for the whole human race. "*From Jerusalem to Jericho,*" means from *innocence to guilt*, from *purity to rank defilement*, from *blessing to curses*, and from *weal to woe*.

"*Fell among thieves.*" This thief was the devil, the archfiend of hell, the traitor of God and ruiner of men. "*Stripped him of his raiment.*" Let us notice some of the things of which Satan, the old robber, has stripped us. He has stripped us of the robe of *Edenic purity, childhood innocence, strength of will and power of self-control*. "*He left him half dead*" from dissipation and revelry, viz., with consumption, stomach trouble, the cigarette, cocaine and opium habit. These are days when it is almost a matter of impossibility to find a physically sound man or woman. Truly, with the death-dealing instruments of fashion, pleasure, gormandizing, midnight revelry and self-indulgence, Satan has left almost the entire human family "*half dead.*"

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“And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.” We know not of a more perfect picture of formal, dignified religion, or in other words, head-religion, than this, that which fills the head and freezes the heart. It is so far from being able to transform, purify and elevate a human soul, that it is compared to *a man on the other side of the street*. “And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.” This class of men was appointed to serve the tabernacle. Its religion consisted wholly in work, work, work. This Levite did not seem to have an ounce of love, pity or sympathy for a human soul, but simply had mechanical religion. Reader, it may be somewhat of a surprise for you to know that all of these Levites are not dead. There are hundreds of them in almost every city working for the Lord(?), making ice-cream, oyster soup, cakes, selling tickets and soliciting money to get a pipe organ and to build a new church. However, they have never felt an ounce of soul burden or prayed a soul through to victory in all of their lives. They are as ignorant of what it means to prevail with God and pray a soul through as a hog is of the Greek alphabet.

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him he had compassion on him.” This good Samaritan beautifully represents Jesus Christ and His wonderful salvation. Notice, first, *he came where he was*. If Jesus would

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come to only those who live in gilded palaces, the poor drunkard, the harlot, the widow and the homeless beggar would have no part or lot in the matter. But thanks be to God, He comes where we are. He not only comes where we are, but also *binds up our wounds*, i. e., *does something for us*. Where Satan, the old robber, has wounded us with the drink habit, the swearing habit, the tobacco habit and many other habits, Christ binds up the wounds, and delivers us from every unnatural appetite.

"Pouring in oil and wine," viz., joy and gladness. *"Set him on his own beast,"* that is, he lifts us up to the same plane of purity and virtue that He Himself occupies. *"Brought him to an inn, and took care of him,"* that is, put him in a good, clean church where he could be trained and developed in the things of God.

The wild, anarchistic teaching afloat in the land to-day that those who get converted are not to connect themselves with any church, is from the bottomless pit and not from heaven.

The blessed Holy Spirit is the *host*, the *inn-keeper*; therefore He is sure to take care of the children of God until Jesus either sends for them by the messenger death, or comes for them Himself in the clouds of heaven. Oh, hallelujah to the Lamb!

L

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15).

When we look about us and see the many deceivers and false prophets that are flooding the land, like the locust of Egypt, we are all compelled to admit that the flight of time has not removed the need of this powerful exhortation.

The truth conveyed through this striking parable informs us of the fact that it is possible for people to have the outward form of a Christian and not be one at heart.

Now, since Jesus compares them to wolves in sheep's clothing, let us carefully notice some of the ways by which a wolf in sheep's clothing may be detected, so that we may be on the lookout for the wolf.

1. The first simple and easy method by which the wolf may be detected is, that his external appearance does not harmonize with his disposition. It is true he resembles a sheep, but his snarly, contentious, wiry, grumbling, retaliating, impulsive and sour disposition, unmistakably evidences the fact that he is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

2. Notwithstanding his high jumps, loud hallelujahs, long prayers, orthodox testimonies and con-

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stant "Amen, amen," there is something about his voice that causes the cold chills to come over the clean saints, and besides, makes them feel burdened and heavy hearted. Of course, his testimonies are orthodox, his illustrations striking and his apparent knowledge of the Scripture wonderful, yet there is something about his spirit that causes the real saints to mistrust and shun him. The reason for this may be seen in the following statement: He is a wolf in sheep's clothing. In many instances a number of the young and unestablished Christians will take to such a fellow, and think him a wonderful man of God, simply because he talks well and quotes a lot of Scripture. But to our mind this makes him the more dangerous.

3. His statements, under close investigation, do not prove true, viz., where he was born, when and how many times he has been married, where and with whom he last labored in gospel work, how many different denominations he has been connected with, when and by whom ordained, etc. Whenever he relates these facts to the second party they are somewhat different from the way in which he told them to the first party. Why? Because he is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

4. The next way by which the wolf may be detected is by the denomination of food he likes. The sheep likes *clover* and *hay*, but the wolf likes *flesh*. The real saint's chief pursuit in life is to keep blest and get souls saved and sanctified. This is his chief pursuit everywhere. But the wolf is always

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on the lookout for *free-will offerings and gifts*. He is of a forward disposition and is always begging the people of God for something. He is constantly speaking of his needs, with a secret hope that they will give him something. A man came into our office one day and did not see anything lying around on the desk in the way of money but some postage stamps, so he asked for a part of them.

5. Yet another sure way by which the wolf can be detected is in his *motion and walk*. The wolf has a quick, bouncing up and down movement. He does not travel *smoothly, evenly and uniformly*. Neither does the wolf in sheep's clothing live a smooth, even, victorious Christian life, but is *sometimes up and sometimes down*. The reason for this is because he is kept under a constant strain trying to live something which he does not possess. Of course, this accounts for his inconsistency.

6. Still another way by which the wolf can be detected is by his tracks. The sheep has a parted hoof, but the wolf has paws and claws like a dog. The religious imitator can also be detected by his *back tracks*—the cities and places where he jumped his board bill, house rent, furniture bill, doctor bill, etc. Why did he do this? Because he was a wolf in sheep's clothing.

7. And yet another way of detecting the wolf in sheep's clothing is to take special notice of how the seams and ragged edges of his garment join. If there are no seams or ragged edges, but a uniform evenness, he is a sheep and not a wolf. The seams

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and ragged edges, when spiritualized, may stand for slackness in conversation, jesting, exaggerating, broken promises, lightness, worldly-mindedness, or on the Sabbath day doing such things as writing letters, sending telegrams, polishing shoes, bathing or shaving. These small things generally indicate whether a person is genuine or false.

8. How discreetly one conducts himself around the opposite sex, and also how careful and conscientious he is when handling other people's money, generally indicates whether he is genuine or false.

LI

THE SEVEN STEPS TO THE SAVIOR

"Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean" (2 Kings 5:10).

Here we have a beautiful picture of the sinner and the seven required steps to reach the Savior, and get rid of sin.

Leprosy is used in the picture as a type of sin, doubtless for the following reasons: 1. All classes have it. 2. It is incurable by human skill. 3. It destroys and blights. It is a hereditary disease. 4. It becomes loathsome to all classes, and finally results in separation and death.

Let us briefly notice the seven steps he took to get rid of the leprosy, and also briefly paraphrase them in order.

1. He was at a place where it did not take five or six persons to awaken him in order that his need would be revealed. He was so hungry that he gladly accepted the message from a little maid. Evidently, he had no prejudice whatever against women preachers. When men get sick of sin and anxious for God, they are willing to accept the gospel message from the poorest and most illiterate creature in the world.

2. He did not try to excuse, conceal or cover up his disease, but frankly admitted that he was a

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leper, and by so doing it put him in a position to obtain assistance from those about him. No one who tries to stand on his own morality and good qualities is in a place to receive help from God or the saints. He must frankly admit to God and man that he is a sinner and stands greatly in need of a Savior. The record says, Naaman was *a captain, a great man, an honorable man* and also a *mighty man of valor; but he was a leper*. He had a disease that put him not only on a level with the poorest man in the world, but also far beneath the brute family.

3. He not only acknowledged his plague, but became so mightily concerned and anxious about being healed that he did not care who knew that he was a seeker. He was not like many persons of to-day, who are ashamed to have their society friends see them seeking God. Naaman broke the news to the king and all about him. Reader, it requires this same determination and diligence to get rid of sin to-day.

4. He became so greatly in earnest that he was willing to give not only himself to the Lord, but also his money (2 Kings 5:5). The twentieth century religion works largely in people's heads, and does not reach their hearts and pocketbooks. We notice the man in Ezekiel's vision got into the river of grace not only up to his ankles and knees, but also up to his loins where his pocketbook could get baptized. A man does not have to get sanctified before he gives his money to God. He has to give it in order to be a Christian. Moses, when preparing to

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go out of Egypt into the wilderness to serve God, found it necessary to *take every thing*, and not leave a hoof behind.

5. Naaman, in reaching the cure, did not have a smooth, pleasant road all the way, but met some unfavorable circumstances and stubborn opposition. The first thing he met, which somewhat beclouded his anticipations, was a cool reception from the king of Israel (2 Kings 5:7). The seeker may sometimes receive a cold reception from even the preacher; however, he must not let this impede his progress, but must go on. The next thing met, which greatly chilled his fervor and brought a dampness over him, was the way in which he was received by the prophet, and also the prescription prescribed for his recovery. He had a way of his own planned out, by which he expected to receive the blessing, which was quite different from Elisha's prescription. This was such an awful disappointment that it well nigh upset him, and almost caused him to go back and give up. *Preconceived notions* and *human air-castles* are usually great hindrances to souls seeking God. They expect Him to bless them according to their plan and ideas, and, on being disappointed, become confused.

6. The next awful jolt that he received, which greatly prepared him for the cure, was that *his proud, stiff will was broken*, and he humbly submitted to the will and dictates of his inferior. We do not usually know what kind of a *spirit* and *will* some people have until we cross them. God knew

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this stiff, self-willed spirit had to be broken before he could obtain the cure (2 Kings 5:11). This spirit fluttered and raged for a few moments, but finally came down and submitted when the servants said, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" It always requires a humble and contrite spirit to obtain a blessing from God. David said, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psa. 51:17).

7. Finally, he had to obey the sayings of the man of God *to the letter*. He did not receive the cure after dipping four times, nor five. Neither did he receive it after going down the sixth time. He could have said, like many do to-day, "Oh, that was *man* who said that: I do not have to do everything that man says; I have dipped six times, that is near enough. We are not expected to do *everything* the preacher says. We are not to live up to his convictions, but are to live up to our own. There are none of us perfect." It required *perfect obedience* to the letter for him to obtain the cleansing. So does it to-day. If we would go clear through and get the witness and strike fire, we must meet all the conditions.

LII

SAUL, BALAAM AND SOLOMON

The persons whose names compose the title of this chapter are among the most prominent backsliders of Bible times. God, being aware of the fact that there is no state of grace attainable in this life from which men can not fall, if they fail to watch and pray, has almost exhausted the entire Bible in admonishing and instructing them how to retain the grace of God and live a holy life.

For the special benefit of the reader, we want to briefly mention some of the principal acts which caused these men to lose their way in God. We sincerely hope these remarks will serve as an age-abiding monument of warning to both reader and writer.

Let us take up the life of Saul and carefully notice the dark, disastrous steps which led to his ruin. First, it may be necessary to prove to the reader that he at one time did possess the grace of God. Samuel said to him in the sixth verse of the tenth chapter of 1 Samuel, "And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man." The ninth verse reads as follows: "And it was so, that, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart."

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Let us next notice what the sacred record says about him losing the Spirit; that is, about him backsliding, "But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled [terrified] him" (1 Sam. 16:14). Before entering into details, let us read his death-bed testimony, so to speak; for people usually like to hear what a man has to say on his last day upon earth. "And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more" (1 Sam. 28:15).

Let us briefly notice the five steps which landed him into a lake of fire and brimstone. 1. *He broke with God in his affections and secret life*, and lost that *high-class, careful, holy esteem* which he had previously held for God and His ways. Reader, think of this! 2. He wilfully disobeyed a plain command. This, of course, was a natural result of his inward condition. Whenever people break with God in their affections, it is easy to violate His law (1 Sam. 15:3-9). 3. The third downward step was, he lost his temper and manifested a bad spirit toward the folks at home. It is an invariable fact that whenever people have an inward break, they usually become touchy, crabbed, hard to please and hard to live with (1 Sam. 18:10, 11). 4. He became *self-willed, head-strong, overbearing and hard-hearted*. In his anger and pride he ordered eighty-five priests to be slain (1 Sam. 22:18). The most unreasonable and overbearing class of people found in the world are conceited backsliders. Some months ago a back-

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slider of this type was riding along in his auto, when suddenly he stopped in the middle of the street and exclaimed, "Something has grabbed me." He was ill just a few days, and then passed into eternity to meet a rejected Redeemer. 5. The last downward step which completed his ruin and landed him in a lake of fire, was *public opinion* and the *fear of man*. He, no doubt, would have obeyed God, had he not been afraid of what people thought. Ah me! at that point dropped the black curtain of a wasted life, while these hopeless words died on the breaker of time, "God is departed from me and answereth me no more!"

The prophet Balaam is the next character whose ruin we promised to investigate in the beginning of this chapter. Let us hurriedly notice the four brief steps which led to his ruin.

1. He rushed ahead of the Spirit of God *and did as he wanted to*, but not according to divine instructions. The instructions which he received from God in Num. 22:20 were, not to go unless the men came and called for him. Notice how it reads: "*If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them.*" The above words were to be Balaam's fleece, but he did not wait to see whether it would get wet or not (Judges 6:36-40). The twenty-first verse explains how he yielded to a hasty spirit and ran ahead of the Spirit of God. Notice how it reads. It does not say the men came and called for him, but reads as follows: "And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of

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Moab. And God's anger was kindled because he went" (Num. 22: 21, 22).

2. His next downward step was, he yielded somewhat to the temptation of *money* and *prominence*. Thousands of spirit-filled men have failed at this point. Listen to old Brother Paul's advice on this subject. "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Tim. 6: 6-11).

3. The next disastrous step which he took, was compromising with people of inferior light. The prophet Balaam was not the only professor of religion who made this serious mistake. Hundreds of church members on finding out that their pastor and church do not indorse dancing, theater-going, baseball, card-playing, etc., withdraw from that church and seek a church and pastor who do not condemn such things. Sometimes, genuinely saved persons get tried, and while under this pressure, withdraw from the clean, radical church in which they were saved, and become a member of some formal,

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worldly church. This is done many times at the cost of their immortal souls.

4. The final step which grieved God away, shut up heaven over his soul and made him a candidate for hell's corrosive flames was, he was *persistent* and *determined* to do the thing which God had told him several times not to do. In reading the twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters of the book of Numbers, it really stirs one's righteous indignation to see how many attempts Balaam made to curse Israel even after God had told him they were blest. Twenty years of careful observation have convinced us of the fact that all of the posterity of Balaam are not dead, for many times nowadays, when people get their minds made up to perform an act, it seems an utter impossibility for the class-leader, the preacher, or God to get them turned. There are hundreds of unhappy married couples in the land today because they became headstrong and would not take advice. There are also many broken-hearted girls throughout the country wearing the conspicuous badge of shame and disgrace, because they would not take instruction. Equally so are the jails and penitentiaries filled with promising, noble young men, who landed there through the gate of "*hating instruction.*" The good book says, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword" (Isa. 1: 19, 20).

The next and last character to which we give place in this chapter is King Solomon, and the four

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disastrous steps which led to his sudden downfall and irreparable ruin.

1. The first thing which caused him to lose his equilibrium and start on his hellward drift was neglecting to keep prayed up. He had so many things to occupy his mind that he lost out in his prayer life.

2. The second thing which greatly assisted in sealing his ruin, was *too much self-indulgence*. Any time a spiritual man or woman becomes gluttonous, extravagant and a slave to appetite, they are undoubtedly in a spiritual decline and nearing a fall.

3. Still another thing which greatly assisted in paving the way to ruin was associating too frequently with the opposite sex. One of the surest ways to ruin in the world is to grow slack at this point. It would have been well, no doubt, for Solomon to have taken a few doses of his own advice found in Prov. 5:1-5, where he said, "My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding; that thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge. For the lips of a strange woman drop as a honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell."

4. The last thing which cast the die and sealed his irretrievable doom was pride and dishonesty of heart. From all appearances, he was too proud to confess his backslidings, humble himself and get

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back to God. Thousands, since the days of Solomon, have made a similar mistake by yielding to pride and dishonesty, and have landed in a lake of fire and brimstone, "Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

"But when the concentrated light of God,
As sunbeams in a burning-glass condensed,
Fell on his naked spirit, it touch'd, it woke
The dormant sense within him: and a moan
Stifed was heard; and mighty shudderings
Shook his colossal frame; for in that light
His pride was despicable littleness,
His wisdom idiot folly, and his lies
Rent cobwebs in the torturing glare of truth."

LIII

DWELLING DEEP

"Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor, saith the Lord" (Jer. 49:30).

"An allusion is here made to the custom of the Arabs, who, when about to be attacked by a powerful foe, strike their tents, pack up their utensils, lade their camels, which they can do in a couple of hours, and set off to the great desert, and so bury themselves in it that no enemy either will or can pursue."

The word "deep" is used only a few times in the New Testament; nevertheless, wherever it is used, it carries a wonderful significance. Note just a few quotations: "*Launch out into the deep*" (Luke 5:4); "*Digged deep*" (Luke 6:48); "*For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God*" (1 Cor. 2:10).

The word "deep" naturally suggests the opposite to shallowness, lightness and frivolity. In other words, it means that we are to be rooted and grounded in the love of God, and wholly devoted to His service. All of this is implied in the words "*dwelling deep*." The text is a timely exhortation to the holiness people of modern times, for, no matter in what direction we look, deep spirituality seems to be on the wane. Instead of pious, plain-

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attired, spirit-filled holiness advocates, as in former years, the country is becoming infested with a tribe of proud, superficial, self-conceited, dressed-up professors of holiness, who have the theory, but are void of the Spirit and power. They are as far from the standard of purity, power and holy living, set up by the fathers of Methodism, as day is from night and heaven is from hell.

Let us notice a few reasons why this exhortation should be given. 1. If we would successfully weather the fierce storms of error, fanaticism, compromise and shallowness that are sweeping over the land to-day, unsettling almost everything and everybody, we must *dwelt deep* in God.

2. If we would be true, immovable way-marks to the glory world, holding an even light to perishing souls about us, we must learn the wondrous secret of *dwelling deep*. To mislead an immortal soul is one of the greatest crimes that can be committed by a human being. Oh, that men would properly realize this awful fact! We have all, no doubt, read of the disadvantage, inconvenience and perplexity brought upon early-day travelers through some mischievous boy turning the hands of the guide-post. Reader, has some urchin of hell in the form of an angel of light succeeded in turning you from the true and tried way? Is your influence, which at one time was such a blessing to those about you, now sending forth an ill savor, and an uncertain sound? Are you pointing souls to heaven or hell?

3. The early-day farmers and fruit growers, to

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prevent their vegetables and fruits from becoming affected by the frost and various changes of the fall and winter weather, used to dig deep holes and deposit them in the earth. If we would have an experience where we never become affected by the Jack Frost of slander, persecution, commendation, popularity and the love of money, we must go below the frost line and make our permanent abode in the deep vale of humanity.

4. If we would always have an uninterrupted and unclouded vision of God and heavenly things, we *must dwell* deep. It has been said by some one that the stars in the firmament could be seen at noonday from the bottom of a deep well. So it is with one who dwells deep in God; he sees and reflects the light of heaven upon a benighted world. He gets visions and revelations unseen by those about him. "He who walks with God carries in his very air and countenance a sweet serenity and holy joy that diffuses tranquility around. He who walks with God receives and imparts life whithersoever he goes; as it is written, 'Out of him shall flow rivers of living water.'"

5. If we would be burden bearers and intercessors having power with God and with men, we must, with Christ, withdraw ourselves from the busy throng and *dwell deep* in God. No one can keep the spirit of prayer and soul burden who spends much time in social gossip.

6. A final reason why we are to *dwell deep* in God is to secure ourselves from becoming top heavy

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through spiritual pride, importance and a sense of our own goodness. He who expects to *build high* must *dig deep*. There are many radical, conscientious souls, who, unwarily, permit pride to slip in at this point. The reason for this, however, is as follows: They form too great an opinion of their own experience, sayings, sermons, methods, efficiency and advice. This is one of the most dangerous snares for those who are greatly used of God that we could mention. Spiritual and financial success are storms which but few weather without being capsized and wrecking either on the rock of egotism or greed. Reader, walk carefully and dwell deeply in God.

The next class of information we wish to give here, is how to dwell deep, for it is quite likely that some of our readers will obey the exhortation given in the text.

1. He who would dwell deep must first *dig deep*. This can be done only by an unusual amount of prayer, fasting and self-denial. All persons of eminent piety that we have ever seen or read about were persons who spent no small amount of time in prayer and fasting. Jesus Christ, the world's Redeemer, and holiest of men, found it necessary to spend whole nights in prayer and many days and weeks in fasting and self-denial. Paul, Wesley, Fletcher, Luther, Whitfield, Finney and others, spent hours daily in prevailing with God for themselves and a lost world. Reader, if you would dwell deep and have power with God and with the lost of

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earth, you, too, must have long and frequent seasons of lying before God in prayer. Three of the chief faults found among modern Christians are as follows: *Eating too frequently, talking too freely, and praying but seldom.*

2. The next information we would give on how to *dwell deep* in God is, do not be in bondage to anything under the sun. Permit no temper, passion or appetite to have dominion over you. Keep everything beneath your feet. Always live in a place where you can say to every created thing, "This far and no farther!" Self-indulgence is the leaden weight that is hobbling many a soul and hindering them from launching into the deep with God.

3. A third necessity in dwelling deep is to keep an exceedingly watchful spirit. Never go out of the watch-tower, for the flesh is not dead, neither is the devil asleep, but as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Jesus said, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch." Watching is such an important duty that He placed it before prayer. He did not say, "Pray and watch," but "Watch and pray." No one who does not live an exceedingly watchful life at all times ever keeps an even experience. We are to keep a constant watch over our tongue, our appetite, our fancy and our infirmities, or else, in an unguarded moment, they cause us to offend God.

4. Still another thing necessary for those who would *dwell deep* in God is to keep clothed with a lowly, submissive spirit. One that mildly and

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sweetly endures all kinds of ill usage, reviling and persecutions, without a murmur or stir of impatience. What saith the Word? "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2: 14, 15).

5. The next thing that will greatly assist us in *dwelling deep* is to learn the art of discerning the difference between *theoretical holiness* and the *spirit of true holiness*. There are numbers of good, honest souls switched at this point. They think every one who preaches and teaches holiness is in possession of the experience. They have not been awakened to the fact that over two-thirds of the modern holiness professors are nothing more or less than a lot of apostate compromisers who are trying to make people believe they can be sanctified wholly without dying out to the world or meeting the conditions of God's Word.

The fruit of true holiness is purity, perfect love, humility, self-denial and the fulness of the Holy Ghost; but the fruit of theoretical, man-made holiness is pride, stiffness, lightness, shallowness, worldliness, empty bluster and quick-time jingle.

Pious John Wesley would be surprised should he rise from the dead and step into one of these shallow holiness meetings where the leader wears a gold watch, gold glasses, gold stick pin, fashionably cut clothing, and patent-leather shoes, while all about

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him would sit a number of fashionable women with feathers, flowers and posies on their hats, costly silks and satins upon their persons. Many of these uncircumcised Philistines even try to shout and get blest while rigged out in low-necked waists, transparent hosiery, high-heeled shoes, and skirts that remind us of the skin on a sausage. And to top off the whole thing, they have the audacity to stand up and testify to being *saved*, *sanctified* and *healed*. In the pulpit sits a trim, fashionable, so-called holiness evangelist chirping "Amen," "Praise the Lord," "Alle-lu-ia!" I say this state of affairs is enough not only to make John Wesley sad, but sufficient also to make angels weep.

It would be a blessing to the cause of God if these compromisers were run out of the country. Reader, Bible holiness has not changed one iota, but is identically the same as it was when Paul penned the following lines to the Thessalonians: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). O Lord, give us something deep and solid, no matter what the cost may be!

6. The next incentive to *dwelling deep* is to establish it in our minds that Jesus Christ is our pattern, and that our entire life is to be a copy of His. We should make it our chief aim and pursuit on earth to be Christlike in all of our dealings, words and thoughts. This can be done, however, only through much prayer, self-denial and watchfulness.

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No doubt, the testimony of John Wesley would be of great importance at this point. "In the year 1725, being the twenty-third year of my age, I met with Bishop Taylor's 'Rule and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying.' In reading several parts of this book, I was exceedingly affected; that part in particular which relates to purity of intentions. Instantly, I resolved to dedicate all my life to God, all my thoughts, and words, and actions, being thoroughly convinced there was no medium, but that every part of my life, not some only, must either be a sacrifice to God, or myself; that is, in effect, to the devil.

"Can any serious person doubt this, or find a medium between serving God and serving the devil?"

What saith the voice of inspiration at this point? "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

LIV

PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME

"And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched" (Acts 27: 1, 2).

The blessed Bible is of such vast importance to the human family and contains such a variety of blessings, that it is no marvel that authors, philosophers and poets have spoken of it as being a "gold mine," "fount of knowledge," "lamp of life," "flower garden," "an art gallery," and an "artesian well." While this is all true, the Bible is also the Christian's geography, map and guide, which describe in minutest detail every inch of the country between earth and heaven. In the narration of Paul's journey to Rome we have, in glowing colors, a perfect description of the spiritual journey from earth to heaven. Now, for our special edification, let us carefully and prayerfully study this spiritual map and see how perfectly it points out the plains, hills, valleys, tunnels and sloughs along our pathway home.

1. In verse thirteen Paul and his company were carried for a season by a *gentle south wind*. The spiritual meaning of this "south wind" is *calmness, evenness, sweetness and tranquility* of spirit. Every newly converted soul is borne for a season by these

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balmy breezes. During this joyous honeymoon, there does not seem to be such a thing as a cross, temptation, trial or devil in the universe, but every day seems to be Sunday and every moment a jubilee of praise.

2. In verse fourteen, we notice that immediately after this series of south winds, there arose a tempestuous wind called "*Euroclydon*" or "*Levanter*." Every Christian well remembers the time when this new epoch was introduced into his life; when for weeks or months he had been fanned by the balmy breezes of joy and peace, but suddenly one of the "*Euroclydon*" storms of persecution, temptation, heaviness and darkness rushed in upon him. Had it not been for the advice of a more experienced Christian, he would have been blown away. Saint Luke in verse eighteen says they were "*exceedingly tossed*." So will the beginner in the Christian life frequently find himself severely tossed by the winds of hell. However, we are glad to say that the grace of God is abundantly sufficient.

3. We notice in verses eighteen and nineteen that the storm caused them to unload and throw overboard some cargo which they had previously thought they must have. It is true, joy and ecstasy play an important part in the Christian's life; however, God never uses them to *regulate, discipline or line up* His children. He always uses storms, pressure, heaviness, fiery trials and darkness to bring this about. It takes these and *these* alone to bring us to the place where we will have a close self-ex-

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amination and also unload bywords, light, nonsensical expressions, formality, unnecessary adornment, chewing gum (tobacco's substitute), and all doubtful conduct. A season of spiritual pressure and darkness has prevented many a soul from landing in hell.

4. In verse twenty, Saint Luke informs us of the fact that they lost sight of the sun for *many days*. The beginner, before becoming established, may also lose sight of the sun of "*feeling*," and be compelled to walk by faith for many days. However, there are two facts that are to be kept in mind. First, the sun was *still shining* behind the dense clouds. Second, they were still en route to Rome. Reader, if you are walking in the light and obeying God on all lines, you are as much on the way to heaven when pressed, tempted and devoid of joy and feeling, as you are when filled with rapture. Notwithstanding these dark circumstances, Paul's faith reached beyond them and triumphantly exclaimed, "I believe God!"

5. The next source of encouragement revealed in the lesson is this: God always sends help and consolation in due time, even though it be at the last hour. Notice Paul's testimony in verse twenty-three: "For there stood by me *this night* the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve." Paul did not brand himself a backslider simply because he had not seen the sun for many days, but held on by faith.

6. The next thing seen in the experience of Paul at this time, which is quite similar to that of every

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Christian, is this: He was, for a time, severely censured and criticised by a company of people who misunderstood him, but who later on were forced, by his life and conduct, to change their minds. Observe how it reads in Acts 28:3-6, "And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. Howbeit, they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, *they changed their minds*, and said that he was a god." They will do the same nowadays, if we keep true.

7. The next point of interest seen in Paul's trip, which is quite similar to the Christian's journey to heaven, is in the fact that he had to take a *second boat* before he could reach his destination. You will notice in verse one that they began their journey on a boat bearing the name "Adramyttium" (justification), but on meeting so many storms and heavy seas (so much trouble with the Old Man), they were shipwrecked. However, after a time of *tarrying*, they boarded another ship bearing the name "Castor and Pollux" (entire sanctification). In retrospecting the experiences of the children of God in both the old and new dispensations, we have discovered

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the fact that they also found it necessary to *tarry* and take a second boat, as the first one would not take them clear through. Abraham changed boats at Mamre (Gen. 17:1). Jacob changed at Jabbok (Gen. 32:28). Moses changed at the burning bush (Exod. 3). Isaiah changed in the year that King Uzziah died (Isa. 6), the disciples changed in the upper room on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). In Hebrews 12:14 Paul declares that it is absolutely necessary for every son and daughter of Adam, who expects to see the Lord, to take this second boat, namely, "holiness of heart," the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.

8. The closing thought which the lesson conveys is: Notwithstanding all the disaster and danger met by Paul along the way, God was faithful in keeping His promise and taking him safely through to Rome. Just so will He take us safely through to heaven, if we continue to "trust and obey." He made the following promise ages ago and is well able to perform it: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

It is true, life is a long, stormy voyage; however, if we are faithful, God will surely take us through.

Tho' tossed by the wind and waters I am,
Far out on the ocean of time,
I'll soon be beyond the isthmus of life
And home in the crystalline clime.

The shadows of evening are falling fast,
The sunbeams are gilding the west,

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The tow'rs of heaven are heaving in sight,
I'm nearing the land of the blest.

And, oh, when I stand at the great white throne,
Amid that redeemed holy throng,
I'll worship the King and make heaven ring
With praises unheard of in song.

LV

THE BEGGAR LAZARUS

“And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his [the rich man’s] gate, full of sores” (Luke 16:20).

In the Bible God has given us several examples of *rock-ribbed* fidelity. In the life of Joseph we see it weathering a storm of severest slander. In the life of Daniel we find it swimming an almost shoreless sea of compromise. And in the life of the lion-hearted Paul, we find it flourishing in the vale of almost universal persecution. In the above text God calls our attention to a flawless gem of fidelity, shining, with no common luster, from poverty’s darkest background and in misfortune’s most gloomy vale.

Let us for a few moments closely observe this poor, unfortunate man. See him half clad, meager and sick, sitting at the rich man’s gate. “Observe his pale cheek, his sunken eye. Listen to his long, lamentable groan which announces the want that gnaws within. See how the sun scorches and burns his defenseless head. Observe him still more closely. See how his limbs with palsy shake, while all his flesh is full of putrid sores and noisome wounds.” Oh, what an object of pity, as he lies at the rich man’s gate daily tortured by a grievous swarm of flies!

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Now, reader, since so many people in times of adversity and persecution seem to feel justified in growing discouraged and turning from the path of righteousness, let us briefly notice the dire circumstances under which this man kept true to God.

1. According to verses twenty and twenty-one he did not have a friend on earth. He was alone in the cold, wide world.

“Sad was the sight of widowed, childless age
Weeping. I saw it once. Wrinkled with time,
And hoary with the dust of years, an old
And worthy man came to his humble roof,
Tottering and slow, and on the threshold stood.
No foot, no voice, was heard within. None came
To meet him, where he oft had met a wife,
And sons, and daughters, glad at his return;
None came to meet him; for that day had seen
The old man lay, within the narrow house,
The last of all his family; and now
He stood in solitude, in solitude
Wide as the world; for all, that made to him
Society, had fled beyond its bounds.
Wherever strayed his aimless eye, there lay
The wreck of some fond hope, that touched his soul
With bitter thought, and told him all was passed.”

Many nowadays who start out to serve the Lord, soon become discouraged and turn from the way for the simple reason that their friends and relatives desert or censure them. But with Lazarus it was not so. No doubt, if the following lines had been composed at that time, he would have sung them with great fervor:

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"I'm going thro', I'm going thro',
I'll pay the price whatever others do;
I'll take the way with the Lord's despised few,
I'm going thro', Jesus, I'm going thro'."

2. He was deprived of every creature comfort in the world. He had no home, no downy pillow, no bed upon which to recline, no easy chair, no carpeted floor, no mahogany sideboard, no china closet and no pantry filled with dainty meats and luscious fruit. Oh, what an opportunity for Satan to preach discouragement! But amidst it all he kept true to God.

3. He was not only exposed to the wind, rain and torrid glare of the sun, but was fully exposed to every gale of temptation that blew. He was not only void of all the temporal blessings of life, but also deprived of all the means of grace, namely, the prayer meetings, class meetings, the preaching services, pastoral visits, religious literature, and the fellowship of the children of God. Most people, when in similar circumstances, grow cold and backslide.

4. The next thing which made it extremely unpleasant for this man was, he was an object of public scorn and contempt the livelong day. Some people, when laughed at and snubbed, become discouraged, but this old veteran kept blest day after day amid floods of scorn and contempt. Nothing is said about his becoming discouraged and complaining about the way being hard.

5. From an external view-point, God, too, seemed to have forsaken him. Perhaps he had

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prayed a thousand times to be healed, but no answer came. He may have implored God day after day to send the raven to feed him, but no answer came. All heaven seemed to turn a deaf ear to his importunate plea. Did he grow discouraged and cast away his confidence in God? Oh, no! he *held steady and waited*. He, no doubt, had long since learned that "the reward of waiting was a crown of life."

6. The last and most disgraceful thing about him was, he died in the street. He evidently did not believe in secret orders and sick benefits. He reminds us somewhat of the lowly Nazarene who was born in a manger, slept in the wilderness, died on a tree and was buried in a borrowed tomb.

There are still a few remaining facts about this unfortunate man which deserve some consideration. They are as follows:

1. This homeless, poverty-stricken, disease-ridden man was not a child of the devil, but a son of God, an heir of heaven. It is true some fanatics try to make us believe that if a man is a true Christian, he will never get sick or suffer any temporal need, but this doctrine does not harmonize with the teaching of the blessed old Bible. In Gen. 48:1 we read the following words concerning Jacob: "And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick." We also read in 2 Kings 13:14, "Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died." Paul said, "But Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" (2 Tim. 4:20). And regarding God's children sometimes being in

THE BEGGAR LAZARUS

destitute circumstances, Paul said, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be HUNGRY, both to abound and to suffer need" (Phil. 4:12). Jesus said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. 8:20).

2. Notwithstanding Lazarus' loathsome disease, excruciating pain and also God's apparent indifference, he kept true and *died in the faith*. He was not like hundreds to-day who on not being divinely healed, allow themselves to be switched from the true and tried way into Christian Science, Tongues and many other phases of error, trying to recover their health. We, too, like good old Lazarus, would rather die sick than turn from the true way and be healed by the devil.

3. Still another fact worthy of our notice in the experience of Lazarus was this: Notwithstanding his dire circumstances and thorny pathway, he was favored with the grandest funeral train ever recorded. Notice how it reads: "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." No such statement is given regarding the death of any other saint or prophet. It is true, according to Deut. 34:5, 6, the Lord buried Moses, but concerning our friend Lazarus there is *no burial* mentioned in the text. It simply reads thus: "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom."

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4. In order that the human family might realize to some extent the high premium God places on *unbending integrity* and *rock-ribbed fidelity* in hard places and unfavorable circumstances, He gave this loyal soul not only a place in the paradise of the blest, but the most honorable one. "It is well known, that in the ancient feasts among the Jews, as well as among the Romans, the guest did not sit down at the table, as is now the custom to do; but lay on couches, each having a pillow at his left side, on which he supported his elbow; and he that sat *next to him*, on the right side, was said to lie in his bosom. Accordingly, the expression of Lazarus' lying in Abraham's bosom implies that he was in THE HIGHEST PLACE OF HONOR AND HAPPINESS."

Reader, let us not despise the humble cross nor the ways of providence, but joyfully accept all that comes our way as a blessing of inestimable value from the hand of a loving Father, who is too wise to err and too gracious to be unkind.

LVI

THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices, with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy. And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, *ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof*: it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. **WHOSOEVER SHALL MAKE LIKE UNTO THAT**, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people” (Exod. 30:34-38).

Here we have brought to us in symbols some of the most sublime, spiritual lessons to be found in the Bible, for the following reasons: 1. They deal with the most delicate points in the catalogue of holy living. 2. They give us such plain lessons on how to live in the Spirit and retain His unmitigated favor. 3. They deal specifically with the highest type of spirituality, viz., *adoration, blessing and unction*.

The thought expressed in the above Scripture lesson is as follows: We are not to use lightly or make common the phrases, terms, sayings or demonstrations of the Spirit of God, which He uses through His children. We are not to use these golden ves-

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sels for common purposes. Hundreds of people grieve the Spirit at this point and live the greater part of their lives in a half-spiritual eclipse. In the following lines we shall make a feeble attempt to describe some of the many ways of imitating the holy perfume and making sacred things common.

1. For a Christian to speak carelessly and flip-pantly of his style of getting blessed, viz., the way he shouts, the way he runs up and down the aisles, the way he holds up his hands, etc., is in a way making sacred things common. Even among publicans and sinners it becomes distasteful and breeds contempt for a person to speak too freely and frequently of themselves. When we speak of our blessings, gifts and graces, it should be done with great humility of mind. When the apostle Paul was writing about a great blessing which he had received some years previous, he spoke after this order: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12: 2-4). For one to speak in a light and flippant way of his blessings or demonstrations is a sure sign of either ignorance or carnality.

2. It is another way of making the holy incense common, for even Christians to make bywords of the

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sacred language of the Spirit; that is, to form the habit of using the words "Hallelujah," "Amen," "Glory to God," and "Praise the Lord," in ordinary conversation. All such terms belong to the highest class of worship, and should never be used unless prompted by the Holy Spirit. To use them otherwise is like a man feeding the sacramental emblems to the pigs, or the priest wearing his linen breeches, robe and mitre in the field to plow.

3. For a person to relate in a flippant way how they scorched some one with truth, how they poured it onto them, how they reined them up, etc., is childish, besides it has a carnal jingle.

4. Yet another way of imitating the holy perfume and making angels blush and demons laugh, is when a minister of the gospel tries to substitute the holy anointing and heaven-born unction with bluster, guttural and violent vociferations.

5. The act of trying to bring a meeting up to high tide, and to make it appear spiritual and free, by singing a number of light, quick time, tame religious songs, is another way of imitating the holy perfume. If a meeting is dead, let it appear dead. Don't try to make the people believe God is blessing it when He is not.

6. Another way of displeasing the blessed Spirit and calling forth His gentle reproof, is to talk out either in testimony or in general conversation, all of His special dealings with us. It took the writer some time to awake to the fact that the Spirit did not want him to make known to others all that He

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was showing him. Sometimes we have felt instantly reproved for relating a new lesson which the Spirit had just taught us. God gave John, when on the Isle of Patmos, some revelations which he was not to make known to others. When Paul was caught up into the third heaven, God showed him some things for his personal benefit, which he was not to make known to others. When Peter, James and John were descending the mountain where the Savior had been transfigured, He strictly charged them saying, "Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead" (Matt. 17: 9). Remember, reader, you are not to make known to others everything you get from the Lord in prayer.

7. Still another way of making the holy perfume common is when a soul falls under burden and the workers begin pulling and dragging them around. We verily believe it grieves the Spirit to even touch them.

8. For the person who is to lead the meeting or preach to tell others what he expects to talk about, or in any way make known the thoughts which the Spirit has given him for the meeting, is another way of making the holy incense common. The message of God is so sacred and should be held in such high esteem and holy awe that a man should be afraid to even tell his wife what he expects to preach about. There seems to be something about telling it before hand which takes the wind right out of one's sails, besides grieves God and weakens the force of the message.

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9. A final way of making sacred things common and affecting the holy incense is, when a minister uses slang and bywords in giving out the sacred truths of God. The good book says, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."

B. T. Roberts says, "Say nothing that borders on buffoonery. Do not court a laugh when you should win a soul. Be serious. Be in earnest; and do not be vulgar."

THE END

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